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THE CATHOLIC SPIRIT IN AMERICA

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BY

GEORGE N. SHUSTER
Associate Editor of "The Commonweal"

92693

"Magna res est amor"

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His Grace, the Most Reverend
Austin Dowling, D.D.,

Archbishop of St. Paul, has kindly accepted the dedication of this book. It is here offered to him with gratitude and with deep appreciation of his significance as a prelate and a citizen.

FOREWORD

Looking over what has been written into this very personal book, I cannot help thinking of that caution which the proverb associates with the angels. Is there any good reason why a man should venture to express his mind upon one of the most complex and imposing of subjects—the position of the Catholic in the United States? Twenty or thirty years ago ambition would have dictated silence about one's mere connection with what is termed the Roman Church. Today prudence still seems to suggest keeping the matter under cover as fully as possible. So many people are irritated by it, for some cause or no definite cause, that one who parades it about is in a position similar to that of the enormous lady who tries to crowd a pair of twins and several bundles into a packed street-car. It is altogether obvious, however, that the Catholic, like the lady in question, cannot really hide. If he goes about his business quietly he will be suspected of brooding over some dire plot. If he keeps his bundles under lock and key, the public will be quite sure they contain dynamite. And at present there are so many millions of him that, if he is actually planning to undermine American civili-

zation and institutions, he ought to be examined carefully while there is still time.

Well, for my part I am now submitting to such an examination. I am coming forward here with all my weapons and saltpetre, my treasonable strategy and my doubloons hoarded to carry this strategy into effect. In other words (this book will state honestly and without reserve all those elemental things about which the Catholic world and the contemporary American world differ. It will try to draw a picture of both the Catholic and the American intellect, and show where and why the one picture is not the same as the other. It will attempt to outline the "regulation" Catholic idea of citizenship and see whether that is out of place in this Republic. And when the examination has been concluded, I expect to be judged on the evidence. I do not want to be told that I am (like millions of my Catholic fellowmen, of whom I am only an unworthy representative) a fine fellow who served the nation in time of war, and whose forefathers tilled the American soil—but that such and such an ecclesiastical declaration (the existence of which I do not suspect but which my learned interlocutor naturally knows all about) has damned me in advance. I want to be told whether I can play the American game with the cards I hold in my hand.

It may be admitted in advance that I have no doubt

of the verdict. During several centuries past, Catholic men and women have given of their best to American life with a spontaneity, a vigor and a generous ardor that nobody who respects facts will doubt. On the other hand, during these same centuries many Americans of the noblest sort have, after long years of spiritual search, given of their best to the Catholic Church with the same generosity and vigor. There has really been a great exchange of human currency between this nation and this Church, and some of it, at least, has been pure gold. It is my deepest belief that the commerce thus begun can be extended as the years go on, and that the Republic, far from being tricked and cheated, will profit as it can in no other way. Others may not concede the legitimacy of this conviction; but they should, if moved by a desire to be reasonable, add to their predictions about the future some plausible explanations of the past. This is likely to prove a rather stiff assignment.

This book has absolutely no dogmatic or apologetic purpose. I have not the shred of a desire to argue anybody into the Catholic Church. That is a task which even commonsense would dissuade me from, knowing as I do that numberless people are better fitted to undertake it. As a matter of fact, the aim is, perhaps, to make it possible for Catholics to go a little farther outside their church circles—to help

bring about the day when they can participate more openly, fruitfully and industriously in the nation's political, moral, social and creative business than they can now. And if that involves for many a closer view of the Church than they have as yet gained, I know that countless Americans are sufficiently interested in their civilization to give a little of their time to such a venture.

G. N. S.

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THE CATHOLIC SPIRIT IN AMERICA

CHAPTER ONE

THE CREATION OF CASTE

I

SOCIAL consciousness may be said to exist where men are busy thinking about what their neighbors ought to be. This consciousness is inevitable and on the whole salutary. It was inevitable that the Roman, when he felt strong enough to mould the world into one vast empire, should have noted very carefully the qualities that fitted men for civic fellowship; it was certainly not salutary that the same Roman began to shrug his shoulders at those qualities, once the Caesars had grown rich enough to build in gold and precious gems. We may dislike this instinct to stamp and standardize. We may even suppose, with considerable reasonableness, that the Roman of later days, who probably thought highly of sundry interesting barbarians, was a more amiable person than the straight-laced stickler of an earlier era. Nevertheless it is a plain fact that the more seriously any one of us takes the business of government, of the state in its relatively more gen-

eral sense, the more insistent he becomes in advocating some normative definition of his fellow man.

All of us begin by agreeing that the unfit ought to be labeled. If John Jones commits a felony, there is a rush to see that his finger-prints are duly recorded. In all countries where immigration is a social factor, experience has exacted constantly more rigid specifications regarding the kind of person to be admitted. The history of the automotive industry has inspired the existing legal demand for examinations calculated to prevent incompetent people from doing forty miles an hour. From this series of notations, the ascent to more positive and comprehensive decrees is easy and attractive. Every democratic nation, for instance, grows toward maturity by repeating two slogans: first, every citizen can vote; second, every good citizen does vote. The second is, obviously, more qualitative and less generally true than the first. Finally, every nation, whether democratic or not, gradually realizes that its maturity is equivalent to its consciousness of its aristocracy. A people which does not take time to measure the height of its best men has not yet got through with being a mob.

I am quite aware of the innocence of these remarks. Almost everybody who writes has already said something of the same kind. But they lead up to a principle which is not so universally evident and which seems to deserve attention. This I should like to state tentatively as follows: Desire to establish a

standard of citizenship—a modern equivalent of *civis Romanus sum*—is likely to exist in the same proportion as earnest but unprofessional concern with problems of the common weal exists. I say "unprofessional" because the citizen who makes it his business to live in the contemporary political world, as a candidate, office-holder or commentator, uniformly finds out that tact in dealing with things as they are is his most valuable asset. That is why the tendency we are discussing here is rarely stressed in the newspapers, and never in a national campaign—a fact to which, by the way, we shall return later. But there are a great many persons who, for one reason or another, get interested in the conduct of their country and then make the startling discovery that a great many of their neighbors have different concepts of righteousness or, it may be, no such concept at all.

What may one naturally expect these people to do? Well, a perfectly human thing. They seek to prove that the ideal civic community projected by their view of life and morals exists in actuality. They do what we all do, more or less unconsciously, in making a circle of friends. The real reason why I clasp Oliver to my bosom rather than James is because Oliver repeats, to some extent at least, the definition I have formed of myself. Of course this definition reposes upon a good many stones, some of which the builder himself thinks he has rejected.

It is normal, for instance, that a group of people who have been in one place longer than any other group should feel a common bond. A hundred similar likenesses—of ancestry, of modes of employment, of language, of educational formation, of religious belief, to name only a few—will lead to a consciousness of solidarity which only some variety of social dynamite can destroy.

We are all familiar with ways in which such a sense of solidarity is expressed in American life. During several generations resentment of the foreign-born has cropped out in various places and has often led to violent explosions of temper. "All American" organizations, some of them extremely crude and vicious in character, have galloped about in flimsy disguises, unified by instinct and a few symbols rather than by any intelligent doctrine. Programs of civic training, often inculcated with the seriousness which used to characterize the old Sunday School, have been regarded with the same admiration as that with which the old-fashioned mother used to gaze upon her recipe for gingerbread. One may say offhand that none of these things is very dangerous, because they have little connection with intelligence, which is the only really formidable weapon belonging to mankind. Of late, however, the instincts to which they testify seem to be receiving the complement of a doctrinal code. If this could ever manage to become reasoned, scientific, as reliable as the in-

formation we possess regarding physical health and disease, it would undoubtedly enlist enough popular support to revolutionize community life in the United States.

Consider for a moment what has happened in the field of education. Much attention has been directed towards the laws against teaching evolution which have been passed and enforced in Bible-reading states. But these laws are really innocent in essence. They can function without, as far as I can see, violating any fundamental American principle. Education is a task which the state assumes; the state itself is a task the people assume; and therefore the people have a right to say precisely what kind of education shall be the goal. Naturally the Protestant churches ought to have discovered long ago that only schools frankly denominational in character and supported as such from the public treasury can, in the long run, serve the interests of religion. That, however, is another matter. Far more significant and intolerant—I use the word here without implying any of the emotional overtones so frequently associated with it—than all attempts to curb this or that kind of teaching, is the overt, industrious effort that has been made to turn the American public school into a propaganda agency for one kind of Americanism.

Assume that the school exists to "prepare boys and girls for citizenship." Assume further that this is absolutely the finest thing this school could do—

finer than drumming some respect for common-sense into dull heads, finer than instilling some appreciation of the works of culture, finer even than initiating the young into that awe "before the presence of God" which governed the lives of Dante and Pascal. Now what have you done? You have transferred into the realm of the ideal something that is really only a practical enterprise. You have asserted, at least by implication, that the noblest object of every life is to transact the business of citizenship. And therefore you will oppose every form of education which, while encouraging loyal service to the state, acts on the belief that the thousand and one claims of humanism and religion are just as worth while. You will, moreover, regard with ill-will those of your fellow-men who take the rôle of citizenship lightly, either because they fancy you a little grotesque, or because they are too much absorbed in other things.

Such educational assumptions are particularly headstrong in the United States because the aura of the "democratic faith" can here be flung round them. Educators of whom Dallas Lore Sharp is a shining representative instance actually feel that a desire to be spiritually a little different from the crowd is sinful. It is, to their minds, treason against the "object to which this nation was dedicated." Let us carefully avoid the mistake of supposing that such men are few. Within certain circles, what I can only

term the fanaticism of citizenship is a densely diffused carbon dioxide. Add to it a peculiar associated idea, which has probably won the assent of a good many more people. This is the belief that the American form of government is singularly sacred, established by Providence or "the destiny of progress" to guide the peoples of the whole world towards the political millennium, and entitled, therefore, to a kind of awe-struck homage. The belief is relatively healthful and invigorating. But from the time of Aristotle thinkers who have at the same time been realists have concurred that the attempt to dogmatize in the field of economics and politics is impossible. We who have seen such dogma doing bulletin service at the end of a World War certainly have some reason for being slightly ironical in regard to it.

But if one has these convictions, it becomes necessary sooner or later to consider other matters. Can the origin of American ideals and the American form of government be traced to any particular group? Is there a "kind of citizen" who serves and represents these things better than anybody else? The answers have been boldly given and have been widely acclaimed. America, we are told, is the product of a definite racial type which gradually developed its own political code, ideology and religious spirit. Everybody knows what is meant, though comparatively few have agreed upon any clearly stated form-

ula. Efforts to isolate and praise the "Nordic backbone" of our civilization generally come to grief because of the difficulties involved in trying to say anything sensible about the Nordic race. Nevertheless, in spite of the enlightment which men like Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler have tried to spread, ignorance regarding the greatness of Mediterranean civilization persists to such an extent that contempt for all that is "Latin" may safely be termed one basic fact about the American mind.

The appeal to religion as a constituent of the national achievement has been both easier and more satisfactory. It is, after all, not hard to show that Protestantism was the creed professed by most of those who took a prominent part in the making of America. Jefferson spoke of the "mummery of the Mass," even though he was by no means a model dissenter; Emerson discountenanced the Roman Catholic Church as one of several fossilized institutions from which no hope for the morrow could be derived; and until recently there was hardly a man on any of the faculties of prominent educational institutions who did not either profess some form of Protestant faith or derive from one. The Pilgrim Fathers, the Quakers, various kinds of Episcopalians and Presbyterians—these figure in the family trees of most sons and daughters of the Revolution. And indeed it may be the concept of freedom which plays so large a part in the historical theory of our country

does have a natural affinity with the Protestant attitude towards dogma and conscience. Of course this notion of the origin of our freedom, together with current notions about other relations between Protestantism and the genesis of United States government, may be challenged on the basis of recorded facts. I am not interested in doing that now. I am merely trying to indicate how plausibly the group in question here can present the case in which it believes.

At the risk of making this exposition too detailed, we may note that still another quality is frequently written into the synthesis of the select. It is a vague but very hard and real feeling that "property" either as a possession or a family memory is an aspect of true Americanism. The pioneer was a person who conquered his share of the wilderness and got a deed for it. Does it not seem to follow that the person without any deed was never a pioneer? At all events, most recent absurd alarums about "reds" take their origin not, as is commonly supposed, in the fears of a conscious capitalist class, but in a certain deeply rooted popular feeling that it is unpatriotic to think of altering the system of ownership and distribution. *You must not even dream of doing so.* Everybody who reads American history knows, of course, that in the beginning there were many sturdy patriots who visualized a different concept of property than the one written into our Constitution. But

what one merely reads is never very effective. What matters is the history that rises spontaneously to govern our conscious and unconscious actions. And whenever opinion in the United States is fully American, the man who entertains an unconventional vision of social justice does not sit, like Georges Sorel, in a sunny *boutique* knowing that intelligent men will consider carefully what he has to say; he will sicken in prison like Eugene Debs, or he will be a pariah jeered at, like Bob La Follette.

In all these convictions of the caste-forming American consciousness, there is a certain element of truth and sanity. If one regards them reasonably, it is impossible to accept them entirely or to toss them aside with a joke. They are really organic modifications of our common civic organism. But when they are accepted statically, when they are taken to preclude the possibility of safe growth in any direction or to any height different from what now exists, they constitute a very serious menace to all those ideas which have given our nationhood dignity, nobility and beauty. They become foursquare denials of the principles upon which the Founders agreed after their long and epochal debates—denials, too, of the sources of conviction out of which the currents of our tradition flowed. There is no reason why I should pause to prove this assertion. The texts are too numerous, too authentic, and too well-known.

II

"The settlement of America," says Mr. Lewis Mumford, "had its origins in the unsettlement of Europe." It is obvious, at any rate, that what we term American civilization or "mind" is the synthesis of a number of dissatisfactions with life as continental men and institutions had established it. Protests and rebellions which originally seemed entirely different from one another have coalesced into a single attitude—into what is less a system of principles or a code of action than a way of determining what is worth while. This is, of course a matter of the greatest importance because the meaning of what America accomplishes in literature and other creative arts is derived from it. But there is still a better reason why it is supremely significant. One can hardly define this reason accurately, but a fairly satisfactory idea of it may be formed by considering for a moment Sorel's doctrine of the "myth." Sorel believed that "men who participate in vast social movements visualize what they are going to undertake as battles that will assure the triumph of their cause." In view of the fact that all human effort is essentially tragic —that no achievement is proof against the irresistible enmity of the cosmos—it is in such visioning of triumphant struggle that they find courage to

proceed. If one weighs this notion earnestly enough, it will prove hard to deny that the energy of a community is aroused and used in accordance with the particular intellectual and moral campaign in which it sees itself engaged.

Where then does the motor power of American civilization lie? It is first of all apparent that intelligence and ethics have been more closely associated here than is usually the case in history. When the nude figure was first introduced into American painting, it aroused a storm of moral indignation which had not yet subsided in such comparatively emancipated souls as Nathaniel Hawthorne. And the gross nude as it is flashed into ken upon contemporary newstands exists precisely because its ability to shock is found profitable by a clique of scavengers. That is only an example. We shall get at the heart of the matter more rapidly by saying that the example draws our attention to the fact that there has really been manifested in American civilization a process of evolution, the most striking event in which is the change of the Protestant ministry into a professorate. This transition was so gradual that few noticed it at all. The old colonial Calvinistic divine suddenly became a transcendentalist; and in another generation or so he normally swore by the scientific, skeptical mind. In this last stage he commonly transferred the virtues of the religious Truth he had

served to the State which he was now serving, to a theory like omnipresent evolution, or even to his racial and social self.

Meanwhile the great mass of citizens had followed as best they could. They were busy doing things, they expected something to be "done" by their leaders, and they wanted to feel that all the "doing" was really worth while. This matter of values had, of course, been simpler in times when the scales were seen as held firmly in the hand of God—in times when the devil stood ready to claim his own and the disaster of unholiness was eternal in its consequences. Now, however, these old simplicities were gone, and few had time to look for them again. Under such circumstances men naturally hit upon a recipe, which was neatly formulated by William James. It is at present fashionable to believe that one has outgrown James—perhaps to the extent of attaining the staggering intellectual stature of Will Durant. Nevertheless his diagnosis of the modern American mind was certainly the soundest made. He saw that his fellow-citizens had, in one manner or another, lost the connection between the customs they were observing and the principles behind those customs. He also realized that in the face of several cultural complexities nobody had time to get at the principles again. In other words, the society to which he belonged wanted to keep on

doing traditional, salutary things without stopping to ask the inevitable and bothersome question, "Why?"

Well, if the customs were to abide, if the individual was not to run completely amuck in favorite anarchies, it was necessary to consider these customs a philosophy sufficient in themselves. Accordingly James phrased his doctrine as follows: "The attitude of looking away from first things, principles, 'categories,' supposed necessities; and of looking toward last things, fruits, consequences, facts." If this formula had been an original invention instead of—as it was—a situation waiting for somebody to express, it could hardly have been so satisfactory. James simply noted the universal prevalence of a mental disease or state of inactivity; and because it was normal he called it health. The whole American spirit of his era was really in favor of "the open air and possibilities of nature, as against dogma, artificiality, and the pretense of finality in truth." Mr. Mumford considers this point of view an "anesthetic"; and certainly it was designed to rock to sleep the terrible inquiry—"Why?" Nevertheless the immediate effect must be sought in that unparalleled mental and physical activity which in a few short years made over the continent. I can never forget, as I am stunned by the noise and bustle of Chicago, that my grandfather was one of those numerous citizens who could have purchased the entire site for

a few hundred dollars. Things did get done, and the doing of them seemed to satisfy.

It so happens, however, that if one concentrates too intensely upon facts, fruits and consequences, the contour of "principles" will tend to grow more and more vague. A farmer whose life is spent nurturing plants which spring, like infinite detail, from the ground, seldom keeps an eye for landscape and horizons. Quite in the same way the "factual" person is rarely able to define the larger purposes of conduct. The haziness of political goals in the United States has often been remarked upon and is evident, for instance, in the Constitutional changes introduced since government ceased to be, in the strict sense, representative. Prohibition may be a desirable thing; federal enforcement of a prohibition mandate certainly is not, primarily because that enforcement cannot be conceived of as a function of federal government. To make the ban upon intoxicating liquors effective, Washington would have to draft local officials everywhere into its service, force its uniform upon the village constable, and make observance of the law a matter of neighborhood vigilance. That is why Mr. Walter Lippmann could suggest, with lucid commonsense, that the way to get rid of Prohibition is through a continuous series of local protests. The conclusion is obvious and typical. If those interested in reforming traffic in liquor had been able to form a clear, definite conception of the United States gov-

ernment, we should not be drifting about helplessly now in a quagmire of corruption, ridicule of law and inefficiency. Their identification of government with a poorly defined ethical maxim has done more than a century of cynicism could have to bring both government and ethics into disrepute. It is in other than political realms, however, that what has been termed "telescope idealism" is most manifest. Critics like Dr. Morey have pointed out how it is responsible for the slow development and limited range of American sculpture and painting. A word may be added here concerning its effect upon general spiritual activity. The largest effect of our education, as that moved from Protestantism through idealism to practical realism, has been to wean the nation from faith in discipline to faith in progress. With Dr. Charles William Eliot the age agreed that one must stop looking for health in a mental regimen inherited from the past and seek it through a series of experiments—elective exercises—upon oneself. Later on we became still more scientific. We declared that before starting our education it was necessary to find out how much of us there was—necessary to measure exactly, with the help of rigid mental tests, the quantity of the something or other that education would affect. We did not know what this something might be; we still do not know; but we have the most delightful and stimulating feeling that, at all events, we are progressing.

To this fact there must be attributed a greater significance than is at first apparent. Accustomed as we have been to witness with astonishment and joy the devices that have come out of scientific investigation—telephones and disinfectants, radios and aeroplanes—it is natural that we should think of the laboratory with that awe in the presence of wonder-working which a more primitive time always associated with religious teachers. We, too, have frequently assumed, with the eighteenth century, that science—the sum-total of the branches of experimental investigation—is the sole source of truth; that the rigor of its methods guarantees an indefinite progress; that, founded as it is upon reason and observation, freed of every desire to serve a cause designated beforehand, and dedicated wholly to the business of establishing facts and determining laws, science brushes aside like so many empty phrases all ideas of the supernatural and of religious mystery. This view, so lucidly analyzed by Brunetière in one of his best discourses, is no longer really challenged by official America. The old-fashioned Bible-reader agrees with the most emancipated skeptic that no compromise is possible between science and religion. The first seeks to exile science; the second is now too sure of himself to worry about exiling the Bible.

As a result of this central, basic dissolution of the natural and the supernatural, we have widened still further the gulf which sixteenth century Protestant

Quietism drew between the soul and the world. No common ground exists between the scientifically created phenomena which startle and fascinate us, which determine the character of the industrial society in which we necessarily live, and the quiet regions of the spirit wherein light is seldom spontaneous but gleams upon us only when we have patiently and laboriously extricated ourselves from the mantles of sin and error, "worldliness and concupiscence." And therefore what we do outwardly seldom bears the imprint of the soul—rarely reveals the luminousness of spiritual peaks climbed in contemplation, or even the calmer, humbler glow of imaginative insight. "Being, not doing"—the recipe for art and personal improvement drawn up so pertinently by Walter Pater—is certainly not the rule of living adopted by a people which swarms in mad droves to catch a glimpse of some successful aviator, but makes not one pilgrimage to its hermits in the desert.

To some extent protests have been made against the intensifying mechanization of our civilization. Nevertheless closer scrutiny of these reveals how fully they are family affairs, born out of circumstances in which only people generically "American" could be deeply interested. The Mencken attack upon Puritanism is a remarkable instance. It, too, sees fruits and consequences. Violently angry with the primness and insipidity, the intolerances and reticences, of fellow-citizens who have clung with

pathetic fidelity to inherited spiritual habits, it scourges the "yokel" with a vigor that can suggest even to otherwise impermeable undergraduates the magnificent possibilities of human speech. But what is it essentially? Martin Luther and Friedrich Nietzsche. The terminology savours of the first; the philosophical point of view somewhat imperfectly of the second. One may well note that Nietzsche, the flogger of prudish and mediocre fools, was the son of a Protestant divine and himself a professor. One ought to note just as well that the Mencken attack upon American Protestantism is itself an American Protestant and professorial enterprise. Its supreme dissatisfaction is the slow movement of the mass which is still stuck in the groove out of which science and other emancipations lifted its betters long years ago. Its supreme hope is that abuse and irony, frankness and naturalistic portraiture, will prove that these "betters" really are better. Beyond that there is not much to Menckenism.

I might go on to adduce other instances. But enough has been said to make clear that caste consciousness in the United States is not merely a civic norm but also a state of mind produced by history. If the "American mind" is definitely the outcome of a process in which a number of dissatisfactions were gradually fused into one spiritual attitude, if even the most notorious protests against the unevenness of the process are themselves determined by the

attitude, it follows that any point of view essentially different would appear to be—would, perhaps, really be—alien and antagonistic. With this we have arrived at what is the difficult but important matter of the present book.

III

A Catholic going to Church on Sunday nowadays is not usually conscious of the abnormality of his act. If he be a relatively prosperous citizen, he will back his automobile into the roadway, nod to an agnostic neighbor who is getting ready for a day of golf, and proceed in a cheerful frame of mind. The events at church do not depart from the accustomed routine: he tries to fix his attention upon the altar and the sacred mysteries enacted there, admits charitably that the sermon might have been worse, and drops what he can afford into the collection-box. He returns to his comfortable home with absolutely no feeling that anything he has done is in the slightest degree remarkable. At the most reflection might lead him to remember that various groups of citizens, even a number of people he has met, consider him a bit peculiar or even undesirable—and that such a Mass as he has just attended would have been impossible in colonial Boston. Nevertheless he would be so conscious of the words of the Constitution regarding religious liberty that these fragments of unpleasant

speculation would speedily depart from his memory.

But in all truth this Catholic has, in several important particulars, staged a little revolution against the American mind. He has gone to church because an authority whose power he recognizes has ordered him to be there. This authority is not resident in the United States; in fact nothing like it exists in the United States. But it has said that if he absented himself from the Sunday service without good reason, he would be in danger of forfeiting his share of purely spiritual treasure amassed in a totally different world. And so willing is our Catholic to abide by its mandates that he does not stop to consider that it is the supreme executive, legislative and judicial power in the society from whose name he borrows the title "Catholic." This society in turn has not one constitution but several. It presents one list of assertions that are binding upon the intellect and which are called dogmas; another that presents a formidable array of rules of conduct; and still another designed to promote discipline through spiritual exercise in common and therefore called liturgical. Moreover, this one power which promulgates so many constitutions never gives way to public opinion on any question of real importance. During the two thousand years of its establishment, it has stated many a new fact or principle, but it has never changed its mind about an old one of any fundamental significance.

By the mere act of going to church the Catholic has, therefore, professed a code of social living and government profoundly different from anything familiar to his agnostic American neighbor who is (let us be bold enough to assume) interested in his country's business, organization and customs. This Catholic adheres to a government in which the separate functions are not administered separately; in which the influence of public opinion is decidedly secondary; and in which conservatism is almost the primary characteristic. Even all this, however, is not so amazing (from an outsider's point of view) as the reasons which have led our Catholic to give his allegiance. One may, of course, legitimately feel that "belonging to the Church" does one a great deal of good. One may be convinced that this Church is the defender of the principles upon which society must count for its health and preservation. The representative Catholic, however, is not swayed chiefly by motives of that sort. He goes to church and submits to ecclesiastical authority because he has faith in certain very mysterious and even inexplicable assertions. The men whose guidance he accepts tell him frankly they cannot explain the most important articles in their creed. It is true that they prove these "mysteries" consonant with reason and adduce evidence to establish them as true. Nevertheless the evidence is not scientific or even mathematical evidence. In the final analysis it is simply mystical experience—of

the individual, the race, the loftiest exemplars of the race. When everything has been said and done, the fact remains that faith in God as the Catholic possesses it must largely be accounted for as the gift of God.

How directly this runs counter to all kinds of here-and-now positivism, to which the American intelligentsia think they have arrived from Protestantism, need hardly be emphasized. For generations Catholic confidence and mysticism have set pseudo-scientific teeth on edge. One reason why this is so is the dogged declaration of the Church that there is no conflict between religion and science; an even better one is that frankly mystical experience—the "gift of God"—lies entirely outside the sphere of the scientific method. Small wonder that atheist societies, wherever they form, stare wrathfully and uncomprehendingly at an institution which can produce eminent scientists on the one hand, and ultra-unscientific saints on the other! Small wonder, too, that a civilization not basically atheist or even agnostic, but inured to convenient compromises with theology, should consider Catholicism alien and antediluvian!

In practice, however, the social habits which the Catholic forms as a direct result of his fundamental dogmatic beliefs are the things which most definitely individualize him. As a child he is inducted into a system of education which holds that he must know

the life and rules of his religious society almost before he knows anything else. When he grows up he finds himself bound to accept a certain awesomely consecrated group of men as intermediaries between himself and God. These priests alone can offer up the Sacred Sacrifice. From their hands he receives the Eucharist—Bread upon which the life of his spirit depends—and into their ears he must whisper the record of his defections. To a certain extent they control his matrimonial plans, the destinies of his children, the very spot where he wishes his body to be laid. And in a hundred minor ways the life of the Catholic is stamped with the seal of his society, is defined as something different from the world around him. For this ineradicable individualism, which only apostasy can destroy, he must be prepared to suffer and, if need be, to die.

Finally, Catholic society functions as a unit and in an individual manner. It has a code of law that has developed side by side with civil legislation throughout the centuries and which is administered by specially constituted courts. Nowadays this "canonical procedure" is seldom taken cognizance of outside inner ecclesiastical circles; but occasionally it renders decisions affecting the marital contract or the tenure of property, and then of course a shocked world perceives its existence. If (it is said) a Catholic tribunal can decide a point in domestic relations, what is to prevent it handing down a verdict in torts? And

if this verdict differs from one arrived at by an American civil court, the Catholic—bound by the iron laws of his creed—must accept it blindly and obediently. The fact of the matter is that the Church law absolves no one from obedience to civil law, unless the second imposes what is morally indefensible—in which case any upright citizen would absolve himself, as happened after the Dred Scott Decision and happens constantly now under a Prohibition Act which numerous citizens repudiate with what seems to them a clear conscience. But we are nevertheless obliged to see in canon law something that a great share of public opinion in the United States considers a source of danger and which does, therefore, further isolate the Catholic.

We must add to our list of oppositions a number of matters which are less tangible, perhaps, but still quite important. The Mass is the central function in a sacred liturgy which is elaborately symbolical and presupposes a considerable amount of training on the part of one who wishes to understand it. Small wonder, then, that the utterly untrained should stare at it in utter perplexity! Even educated and sensitive Jews, like Ludwig Lewisohn and Irwin Edman, have set down in sober print certain impressions of Catholic services which one respects but which one cannot help considering lumberingly amateurish. What must one expect of the hostile and insensitive? Precisely what one gets:—at the worst a belief that the

immemorial Christian sacrifice is a kind of military drill; at the best a feeling that what holds the Church together is skill in conducting pageants that keep the picturesque charm of the Middle Ages. It is, I think, this unwillingness on the part of outsiders to accept the liturgy as a thoughtful and ennobled presentation of possible truth that most galls the educated Catholic. The beautiful spirit of its sacred panorama is so easy for him to grasp that he frequently sins through impatience with the pardonable mistakes of others.

In the same way the literature of exposition and homily which has grown up in the libraries of the Church derives from premises, is colored by experience, which only a careful study of history can make clear. It is so large and complex that very few even among Catholics have mastered it perfectly. To follow currents of thought initiated by Saint Augustine down through the centuries is, for instance, a tremendous task which no layman, however loyal to his Church, could safely undertake. One is not surprised, therefore, that isolated texts and dicta should be quoted most erroneously by controversialists. Here certainly the Catholic may sometimes be hopelessly wrong and his antagonist absolutely right. Indeed the hares that have been started by "amateur apologists" are in many cases still scampering about and causing bewilderment. The fact remains, however, that external exegesis applied to difficult texts results in

distortions, and that these distortions are now making a considerable number of good people think of Catholics in terms of venomous indignation.

To these varied sources of dismay one might add others properly racial and social in character. Something will be said of them later on. Enough has been written to show that if America is really to be accepted as the creation of a definite caste taking its origin in certain commitments to a particular view of society and life, then the Catholic is forced by his "ineradicable individualisms" to remain forever outside. And even if one does not hold this theory with any conviction, feeling merely that the norms of our contemporary civilization are quite "O. K." and challenged only by dangerous "radicals," one is likely to find Catholic principles and habits more than a trifle threatening. Thus an issue is created which cannot be ignored for the simple reason that it is not ignored.

IV

Is the issue based on permanently real differences? Or is it the outcome of a mirage engendered by decayed tissue of the past and its struggles? We may decide most effectively perhaps if we consider the matter in the light of a few simple general observations. In the first place, the issue is not peculiarly American at all. People in Chicago or Indianapolis

who shake their heads over the "un-Americanism" of the Catholic are (without realizing it) doing precisely the same thing as similar people in Germany, England and the antipodes. Before the war taught thinking Europeans something about the value of solidarity, even so liberal a German as Paul Rohrbach could be misled into writing that the existence of a Catholic group was menacing to his country because it meant an outside authority was being respected! When Premier Herriot demanded the abolition of the French embassy at the Vatican, his argument was almost exactly similar. And just the other day Norwegian legislators voted that a man who is very likely the most eminent scholar in their country could not teach at a school subsidized by the state, for the reason that, having joined the Catholic Church, he was no longer wholly subject to the state. In short, one-hundred-percent Americanism, as it envisages the religion governed by the Popes, is precisely the same thing as one-hundred-percent Hottentotism or what not.

This situation has its roots in historical circumstances which will be dealt with more fully later on. Just now one fact may be called to mind. Modern history—the Italian Renaissance, the Religious Revolution, the French and other social Revolutions—is largely the record of attempts to define human consciousness in terms of the individual or the specific group rather than in terms of mankind. So much

happened as a result that the world has not yet had either the time or the impartiality of mind to weigh what occurred in the political order. But from Machiavelli to Trotski there stretches a long and very taut string which has tied each separate nation into a compact bundle and thereby created the feeling that every single bundle is sacred and intangible. In other words, it formed that sense of national private property which we call nationalism. Today, thanks to the scholarship of Harry Elmer Barnes and others, we can see clearly how this sense, becoming more and more acute, irritable and grasping, led humankind into the castastrophe of 1914 as neatly and logically as three angles fit into a triangle.

Boomers of simon-pure nationalism might, therefore, profitably spend a calm half-holiday in meditation. But suppose we grant the righteousness of nationalism for the time being. Why must any local chauvinist regard the Catholic Church as specifically un-American? The answer may be anything you like, but to seem at all reasonable it must be based upon an accurate definition of the Church and then upon an equally accurate definition of the United States. The first has been widely advertised during a good many centuries and may be summed up by saying that the Church professes to be the continuation of the apostolate established by Christ. You may consider this a fantastic delusion. You may have convinced yourself by some manner of reading history that Christ did

not establish any apostolate. I shall not deny your right to such opinions. But I do consider it wholly beside the point to declare that the Church professes to be legitimately entitled to annex the government of the United States. That is simply not an accurate definition. It would be quite as sensible to assert that Mr. Coolidge is a gentleman who claims to have been elected emperor of the Indies.

Similarly, "United States" is not a term which any good and logical citizen will maltreat. There happens to be one accepted definition which we call the Constitution. It is fairly comprehensive and detailed; it has been recommended by the best authorities; it is not amenable to private interpretation. And it specifically guarantees to every person immunity in so far as the form of religious worship he prefers is concerned. The apostolate established by Christ not merely inculcates one form of Divine worship, but is interested in promoting that particular form which western civilization has especially cherished during much more than a thousand years. Therefore the Constitution may be said to have guaranteed quite directly the right to carry on in this country the work of the "apostolate established by Christ." So long as the Catholic Church engages in that work, violating no other provision of the fundamental national law, it is, then, specifically assigned a rightful place in American life. Even if it should break the law in some way, it would not yet merit exile any more than

great corporations are banished because they sin against the Anti-Trust Act. Treasonable offenses alone impose disenfranchisement upon the culprit, and the Constitution plainly states what offenses are treasonable in character. I may conclude, therefore, that until such time as the Catholic Church commits treason its Americanism is vouched for by the only existing authentic definition of Americanism.

We may now proceed a step farther. The "Catholic issue" is not only not primarily an American affair, but it has less reason to exist here than in any other country. After all, whatever we may say critically, this country is a place to be proud of. Through rifts in the contemporary scene, old loyalties and principles gleam in the view and cheer the heart because of the way they have of wedding freedom to order. So long as those rifts are not all plastered shut, we shall really recognize no caste excepting that noble one of men determined to make law equivalent to generosity and spiritual tolerance. Possibly the vast riches of the continent our fathers explored and dotted with fabulous cities is the fundamental reason why we have escaped the social and economic rigidities of other countries. America is the promised land of Thoreau's mouse-trap maker because there are crowds of people here who are able to buy mouse-traps. As a nation we can scatter wilfully the luxuries of civilization; as individuals we have the power to keep out of tread-mills. The great iron rules of hunger and so-

cialization are dictates which we can still successfully ignore. There is zest in the deep breath with which we can take in the epic aroma of our achievement—the long, new roads from somewhere to an everlasting nowhere; the endless cabins in the disappearing forests; corn rising and bending on the plains; the intoxicating harvest of gold and precious ores; the quick, tumultuous, appalling urban condensation, bringing webs of steel rails, great harbors, shimmering streets.

Nevertheless we know in our hearts that this victory over matter is only something like cleaning up the back yard. Indeed our long indulgence in mechanics is probably the most substantial reason why we, as a people, are humble. Nowhere else have so many prophets arisen to upbraid and scoff at the business of building houses in which nobody has learned to live. It is the whole doctrine of a man like Ralph Adams Cram that architecture is a sensible affair only when it is intended for human beings. It is the entire point about an institution like the University of Chicago that money is a good thing because it makes possible the quiet study of the stars. We have few men who would join with Germany's visionary Spengler in a pessimistic renouncement of culture.

And yet the attempt to discern the spiritual code by which the nation takes its most significant vows is difficult. Because America has been so consistently dynamic in expression, one is puzzled by the evidence

for an underlying static motivation. In 1844 Emerson said to Young America: "I call upon you, young men, to obey your hearts and be the nobility of the land." One might look long and fail to come upon another phrase which divines so sharply the tempo of the national existence. Sometimes our people has hungered after righteousness; but it has always had the secret ambition to be noble. Our literature, often flaccidly romantic, is saved by virtue of the "will for good" it enshrines. Even our prowling after wealth has been humanized by the dream of carrying on like a grand seigneur, dispensing bounty and reveling in the distribution of cheques. When Mark Twain—almost the last of the great American rationalists—peered about for a fundamental sham, he found it in our practice of chivalry according to the model of Ivanhoe. And it was really our coveted opportunity, as it probably was our day of disillusionment, that we went back to Europe under the cover of a crusade.

So permanent has been this resolve "to be the nobility of the land" that we, more than any other people, have stuck to the details of our code. The great rebels amongst us have all been Europeans; and whenever, in literature, art or politics, power has risen directly from the soil, it has been dedicated to the defense of law. Hawthorne grew, but in a straight line; Lincoln was rooted in our earth like a vigorous tree; and the career of Robert Lee was a panorama of the rules of honor. No other people

would have left undisturbed, save for a handful of random additions, the fundamental constitutional law. In our own day it may indeed be true that a certain sphere of uprooted intelligence, homeless in its own land, spins about in cosmopolitan fuzz. But this has really nothing to create for us as a people, because it does not understand us as a people. For our chief social virtue is fidelity.

Naturally enough, such civic firmness has its dangerous implications. The cycle of American intolerances is curiously regular and large, governed as it is by the rhythm of a consciousness which sees now this, now that favorite belief endangered. There have been grim moments when it seemed that America would betray itself through exaggerated legal literalism. But almost always the citizenry has reacted by admitting that to "be the nobility of the land" meant, in the finest sense, to abide by the generosity of tolerance. It has sooner or later become clear that largeness of soul is the first meaning of magnanimity. And when Lincoln said, "With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive to finish the work we are in," he gave the rule of tolerance a definite form which nothing honestly American can disturb.

All these things, and more which might be added, indicate the apparent dualism of our national life—the complex working combination of fidelity and con-

siderateness. It has not always been understood; and many of the critics who have struck blows at the nation's mind have surely been misled into thinking of the two elements separately. Those who stand aghast at the prevailing neglect of their intellectual and moral importations wonder first why Americans are so amiable towards these ideas, and secondly why Americans are so indifferent to them. Beyond any doubt they might find an explanation in the experience of the Catholic Church during the decades of the republic's existence. This Church has profited by the reign of tolerant opinion. Though even from the beginning some of its members have doubted the practicability of establishing the Catholic idea under auspices different from those of old Europe, progress has been steady and prevailingly sure.

Indeed one may say that this progress has been the supreme test of the virility of the American principle. Looking back over one hundred and fifty years, one can estimate the general trend of what has been an extraordinary Catholic and American achievement. It has not merely been possible to incorporate millions of wandering newcomers into a Catholic society as concrete as any in Europe; it has also been increasingly habitual to draw from the surrounding world representatives of every kind of spiritual ideal. But apart from these practical tasks there have been two successes of noteworthy symbolical value. The first is the development of a beautiful American-

Catholic tradition, native to the land and identified with every part of it—a tradition the various scenes of which are colorful with California olive gardens, Mississippi hills, Maryland waters and innumerable towers and fields; a tradition which has earned its own right to exemplify the nobility of man through sacrifice and service, heroism and manly courage; a tradition forever identified with whatever vista of the past is opened to the eyes.

The second success is the reverence for American law which the Catholic idea, as expressed amongst us, has inculcated. Here once again it is necessary to distinguish between the spirit and the letter. There are, indeed, innumerable possible statutes which, each in its own way, might violate the nation's purpose. And so it is surely a great historical glory of the Church in the United States that it has never once, since the humble beginnings in Maryland, used its power selfishly or arrogantly. It has of course waged many a battle in its own defense which also, as the issue proved, helped to save the country's honor. But it has never said—and this never is absolute—"Down with the conquered!" All this will become quite clear if one sets down, even in the imperfect manner of the present book, the concurrent records of the American and the Catholic mind.

CHAPTER TWO

THE JOURNEY OF THE AMERICAN MIND

I

IF it were possible to imagine such a being as a purely Catholic observer, detached from all the oddities of temperament that come from having been born and reared in some one earthly place; if one could then proceed to imagine such a person coming square up against American civilization and setting out to investigate it as an absolutely new and highly individual phenomenon:—what question might this fantastic person be expected to ask first? Surely he would begin by listening inquiringly for the spiritual heartbeat of the nation—for that particular vibration which governs its actions and dreams. And we must also suppose that the search would inevitably lead him toward New England, conceived of now as a spiritual rather than a geographical entity. There alone was an American tradition localized and rooted in the earth. There alone was a present made out of the past—a reality out of a cherished ideal—under circumstances which assured a relative permanence. To a considerable ex-

tent, as a consequence, New England became the United States. The vastness of the continent we inhabit, the speed with which nomadic throngs of settlers in town and country tossed aside their poorly associated memories and habits of mind, and the natural trend of historical fortune had their way. Willingly or otherwise, most of us have been persuaded to accept Boston.

The spirit of New England cannot, however, be analyzed as easily as one might suppose. There was Puritanism, to be sure, but so diversified and altered through the prism of English temperament that a reference to it explains very little. Settlers who arrived in the northern colonies after 1620 had certainly not been so suddenly transformed by a generation or two of fanatical preaching that they had nothing in common with the men who made merry round a maypole in Merrie England. The preaching, however, undoubtedly had its effect, especially upon those who preached; yet even the ministers of the gospel were by no means in perfect agreement either as regards dogma or temperament. A cursory study of such autobiographical details as they bequeathed to posterity will, in fact, suffice to convince almost everyone that Puritanism was not always a label which automatically standardized human interiors.

Nevertheless every community does tend to display some kind of spiritual unity. In the case of New England this unity was most clearly indicated, per-

haps, by two quite opposite goals towards which conduct was directed. The first was mystical experience, of the sort suggested by the creed of Calvin; the second was a kind of hard business shrewdness which has since been idealized in the familiar likeness of Uncle Sam. Seen through the windows of a humanist's library, neither was entrancing or full of promise. Yet it should be remembered that both were not products transplanted to America because nobody wanted them abroad, but rather dispositions natural to Englishmen of a certain type who had lived through a series of peculiar experiences. The strain of hard bargain-driving had been rather pronounced on the island ever since the Britons were forced westward; and similarly there had existed all through Old English expression a note of austerity, of melancholy mysticism, too strong to be dispelled by French frivolity after 1066. Dan Chaucer's reflections upon life smack not a little of the reformer's mood, and we need to bear in mind that he was an exceptionally cultivated person accustomed to the urbanity of courts and the laxities of continental cities opening their arms to the Renaissance. We may be sure that his contemporaries placed sackcloth upon their age with a gesture less debonair and considerate than Chaucer's. The Established Church triumphed in Britain because the king and his peers willed it so. But Puritanism grew and finally migrated to America because the men who might have guided the

sturdiest of the English common people either failed at the task, or died attempting it as did Sir Thomas More.

At any rate the settlers of New England did proceed to live by their dual spiritual code. They sent buckshot to and at the Indian chieftains, taking their lands and disdaining their friendship. Little by little they built up a solid polity, in which the chief temporal concern gradually became commerce. It should be noted that the Anglo-Saxon has never been, for the most part, a model farmer. The great, far-reaching agricultural reforms established during the Middle Ages were not the work of English monasteries; and the modern fact that the British people are the most thoroughly industrialized of all the great nations has its real origin, perhaps, in native powerlessness to cope with the land. Today their agrarian problem is most acute; and the wit who noted that Mr. Chesterton, the most eloquent of all the advocates of husbandry, displays no tendency to become a peasant, probably wrote more sociology than he intended to. When Jefferson discussed the problem of pioneer land management, he advocated Germans—a detail which proves the accuracy of his observation. For anyone who contrasts what these Germans have done with soil in Pennsylvania, or what the French have managed to do with Louisiana, with the haphazard husbandry of the Anglo-Saxon in New England, Indiana and a dozen other places, will acquire another

reason for respecting the judgment of the author of the Declaration. The colonist's house was his castle, but it tended more and more to become a bank, a factory or a shipping warehouse.

On the other hand, New England concentrated on divinity. It had a plenty of formidable fanatics, who wrote unctuous treatises, burned witches and made God mostly a keeper of the gates of hell. I have never been able to sympathize with any of them, least of all with those who, like Cotton Mather, possessed a certain learning; but it is impossible not to admire the granite of their souls, upon which the lure of life could not scratch a phrase. They had character and to some extent they knew why. Their fatal weakness lay in the fact that they had nothing else. Professor Gilson has said supremely well that one cannot separate Jerusalem from Athens without ceasing to be a Christian—which means that religion and philosophy are the two parts of the knotted ladder that leads to salvation.

Now for some queer reason the English have never quite succeeded as philosophers. During the Middle Ages their Saint Anselm was a mystic and their Roger Bacon a positivist. Later on the same unbridgable duality appeared in John Locke and Bishop Berkeley, and even in the Cambridge Platonists and the Manchester economists. On the other hand they have manifested an almost unequaled gift for the literary arts. Their verse is the essence of varied and

dramatic human feeling; their prose is creative and intuitive, realistic and yet veiled in reverence. And it was precisely this gift which the New Englanders professed to scorn, clinging to a few bald abstractions, the proofs for which were read into and out of the Bible, stripping their personalities of all that the past experience of their race had left as memorials of beauty seen and truth arrived at. Their Puritan communities were "Christian commonwealths" gone mad over certain spiritual legislative enactments, and quite as uninhabitable as a city which would suddenly direct all its energies to the business of chasing flies off Main Street. The governing impulse was really a kind of fierce desire for moral sanitation.

The Reverend Jonathan Edwards is the most notable and the most representative of theological New Englanders. He was genuinely a mystic, having at an early age arrived at a consciousness of the reality of God which stamps him the spiritual companion of Richard Rolle and Cardinal Newman. He was also a tremendously effective preacher whose images of the Vengeance which pursues sinners seems to have plunged crowds into a frenzy of despair. There is no doubting the man's uprightness and power. But, many opinions to the contrary notwithstanding, he was in no sense of the term a philosopher. To prove this assertion it is not necessary to analyze his thought, to refute or confirm it. All one has to do is to note that it never had the slightest influence upon

any philosopher or even any human being; and it is of the essence of creative thinking that, despite ever so many obstacles of language or distance, it reverberates in the minds of others. Newman, for instance, is proved a philosopher because his views not only inaugurated a great Catholic revival but were appealed to by diverse intellectual movements, including Bergsonism.

I am not a theologian and matters of dogma are not envisaged by this book. Still I believe it is obvious that no specific tenets of theology can be isolated from the general organic interweave of human life and history without dooming them to suffocation, quite in the same way as a branch dies when broken off a tree. No doubt there were serious, even estimable reasons why the original Puritans laid such store by the handful of austere doctrines which they had culled from Christian tradition; but their failure to observe that a handful is not as much as a granary full is at once comic and tragic. It is comic because of the delusion involved; it is tragic because it meant death. Little by little the terrible, sometimes almost intoxicated earnestness of New England Calvinism mellowed into a series of flirtations with the hereafter. The day came when Daniel Webster was content with an easy theoretic acceptance of the Sermon on the Mount; when Ralph Waldo Emerson sat reading the sacred books of pantheistic India with pleasure and assent. Far more important, however,

is the fact that when the Americanized Englishman tired of the few vestiges of Christendom that had figured in the Mayflower cargo, he did not as a general rule send for more.

There was comparatively little danger that the instinct for business should perish. And indeed it prevailed so clearly throughout colonial and post-colonial America that the New Englander would have got it by contagion if he had not already possessed it in abundance. From the start we have been a nation of money-getters—a people faithful, in a measure, to the Bible, but dedicated especially to the Book of Proverbs. With a rapidity utterly unparalleled, an industrial and commercial civilization was erected upon the old provincial towns. "The first three quarters of the eighteenth century," says Dr. Ralph Henry Gabriel, "saw developed on the Atlantic seaboard between Maine and Georgia a degree of civilization that Americans of today sometimes fail to realize. Life had become settled and comfortable. The rawness of the provincial largely disappeared as life became urbane and sophisticated."

It is instructive to note how different in character this Anglo-Saxon achievement was from the career of Spain in the realms farther south. The hidalgo came to America with a passion for gold and souls. Chroniclers whom one finds incredible, though their veracity cannot be questioned, relate how whole crowds of Spaniards were lured overseas by fantastic

descriptions of gold and gems lying about in heaps, and then left to perish by the hundreds of starvation and fever. To the vast world spread out before them they were unable to apply one single industrial principle. The only really practical work done in Spanish America was carried on in the name of Christ's cross. Men like Fray Junipero Serra, walking barefoot across Mexico with a dream of a new Indian civilization about their hearts, accomplished the impossible, building native schools and cities, developing agriculture, and resurrecting the traditions of aboriginal American art. It was a great work, but also a foolhardy one. In the end all that was left of Spain was dust and glory, above which a generation of loutish *mestizos* have now attempted to establish a "government."

The Anglo-Saxon settler knew what he wanted and how to get it. A series of revolutionary maxims helped to kindle the struggle for independence, but the true causes of that heroic effort were undoubtedly economic. "Enlightened self-interest" was popular doctrine in England and America, but it could not mean the same thing on both sides of the water. This fact was revealed by the Stamp Act and the Boston Tea Party with such definiteness that war was inevitable. Ever since the Revolution came to a close we have been accustomed to idealize it—a circumstance which means only that the men who have written our history were not the same as those who

made it. The Anglo-Saxon who created an industrial commonwealth and then gave it national independence was never deeply troubled by idealisms. He went ahead and wrote into law the most important of our economic maxims—the protective tariff. He got rid of slavery with the help of Harriet Beecher Stowe, but he took the trouble because slave-labor was bad economics. He saved the Union in spite of the clear purport of the Constitution, because that Union was a sound investment he could not afford to lose.

Perhaps the definite truth which all this history involves—the truth that in Anglo-Saxon America idealism has usually been in the employ of economic positivism—will become clearer if we discern the rôle which gradually fell to the lot of religion. On the one hand, every form of institutionalized belief soon lost its official status. In Virginia the Established Church was disestablished; in New England the pioneer schools of divinity were slowly transmuted into seats of liberal learning, no product of which would have been so anomalous as an old-fashioned minister. The original long-faced divine had thriven by the letter; his emancipated successor was defined as very orthodox if he still swore feebly by the law. Indeed for the most part he evaporated into an "idealist," writing patriotic anthems, tracts against wine, and (when he was at his best) poetry. Meanwhile the populace struggled valiantly to ap-

pend a certain amount of Christianity to its daily business. To a constantly increasing extent, it was considered unnecessary to "keep" a minister for this purpose. One could read the Bible. A very obliging publishers' society even helped to make this possible by decorating every dresser in every hotel throughout the land with a brand-new copy of Holy Writ. If this did not suffice, one could go every now and then to a camp-fire or revival meeting, at which a straight-from-the-shoulder variety of religion could be "got" to the tune of Hallelujahs. The more definitely institutionalized creeds, like what had been the Established Church, made no headway. Variations of Calvinism—the Methodists and Baptists notably—captured the South and West. None of these ever had, comparatively speaking, great leaders. The men who might have guided them were busy with other things.

But the religious current, so thin and muddy in the spirit's realm, was forever bubbling through a spigot in the commercial and civic domains. Familiarity with the Scriptures was declared a characteristic of United States presidents. School-boards kept a watchful eye out for deviations into heterodox creeds. The Y.M.C.A. was devised for the safekeeping of young business men. Every year the nation solemnly observed the Puritan's Thanksgiving Day with turkey and cranberries. Slowly and steadily the circumstances of the marriage-feast at Cana were

ignored, and total abstinence became a first principle of Christian morals. Far more important, however, is the fact that the American business man's code of rules was identified by many with the maxims of the Saviour. Even people who had a thousand reasons for knowing better accepted the comparison without a qualm. I have heard a Catholic priest and professor declare from his pulpit that the Gospel is the recipe followed by successful modern shop-keepers and magnates:—a declaration made doubly ironical by the circumstance that the chief "example" he referred to approvingly happened to be an admirably orthodox Jewish merchant! This mild and unintentional blasphemy may serve to indicate how completely the final tragic sermon of Jesus— "My kingdom is not of this world"—came to be ignored by a prosperous citizenry. And indeed, of what earthly use is such a sermon, from a business point of view?

Thus the fiery religion which the English Puritans had set out to preserve in America burned out. But their instinct for industrialization and exploitation (the word is used here in no evil sense) throve mightily. What was to be done with all of human life that was not barnacled to this instinct—to that life out of which every generation must build its own kingdom of the soul? Well, we have seen that the minister became an "idealist," and that when there was real stuff in him he also became a poet. Round about the liberalized colleges of the early

nineteenth century—Harvard, Yale, Bowdoin, Williams—the American-English went back as fully as they could to the best moods and achievements of their race. A swift dip into the poets and essayists of the eighteenth, into the romancers and romantics of the following century, restored racial balance to a whole throng of young men who at an earlier time would have become ministers of the gospel. They took to literature as a duck takes to water, because it was their element—the medium in which their people had for centuries hoarded best the spirit's flame.

Of course their literature was not immediately perfect. The sources of the English tradition—which "strangely mingles beef and Plato, ale and the benedictions of saints"—are deep and lie among complex antique realities. Americans had to feel their way back, and could draw from but a few wells entirely their own. They were not so much beginning as getting a fresh start. Nevertheless, that same poise which is so marked in early New England architecture had very quickly become a literary characteristic. In 1865, James Russell Lowell read his *Commemoration Ode*, summing up as will be remembered the emotions of the Civil War period. To a considerable extent, its vital subject-matter was Lincoln; and there is unusual significance in the fact that here one of the most representative Americans that ever lived was singing the praises of an equally representative American: Lincoln, rising

from the soil to accept the heritage of commonsense and character in the conduct of government that had been bequeathed by Jefferson; Lowell, exemplifying the return of the New Englander to that balanced personality and largeness of mind which define him whom we term the "European man."

Lowell is the most representative moment in New England history because he is the classic moment. Everything in him is form; nothing protuberance, undisciplined elan. He knew how to teach, how to travel, how to represent his country, how to take the world, how to use the social graces, how to write poetry. None of his contemporaries said so many sensible things about government, and on the whole none of them wrote so discerningly of books. As a poet Lowell is a classicist, in the generally accepted sense. He was at his best in satire, as Pope and Dryden had been, and his lyrics chanted of wisdom because they could not sing. Never venturing far, he was always sure of his ground. Writing, "Oh, beautiful my country!" in a moment of inspiration, he had solid and sane things in mind, of the same sort as he described in the line, "What is so rare as a day in June?" Nevertheless, in spite of these admirable qualities, the feeling comes upon us all that Lowell is somehow empty. The mental garden in which he moved was vast, but it was filled with little twigs instead of trees. I do not like to divagate into symbols, and yet this one of the tree which has just come to

mind is strikingly pertinent. Christ visualized His work as a huge tree, growing from a mustard seed and filling the world with its branches. Great men have imitated Him in this regard. But Lowell, wandering among the books and lands of the world, courteous to the ideas which were affecting his time, and making a synthesis of the newer New England purposes, had sunk no roots into the soil.

II

One must bear in mind the fatal weakness of Lowell to understand the roads down which his contemporaries traveled in their glorious search for strength. The whole adventure of what may be termed the "American Romantic Movement" was an attempt to discover native wells. When one glances at those who shared in it one finds, of course, that they were looking in what was apparently every direction excepting America. Longfellow and Hawthorne turned to Europe, Thoreau and Emerson felt their way through the books of the East. But this procedure was an essential part of their business and may be accounted for in three ways. First, the origins of America were obviously not in America. A thousand years from now it will still be true that we were cast in the mould of Europe, wrought on the anvil of Christendom. The climate may weather us, we may settle so snugly upon a new foundation that we can

be recognized only with difficulty, we may acquire a coat of moss. But the tell-tale trademark—of language, history, habits of mind, religion—will be visible as long as we conserve some shape. The American romantics sensed this fact, and very properly set out to investigate it. To a greater extent than is, perhaps, realized, we of today imitate them in this respect more than in any other.

Secondly, the Movement actually ended with the discovery of America. On the one hand this was expressed in a whole flood of "local color" literature; on the other hand it was proved, as we shall see, by a confession. At any rate, the "real United States" became a possible intellectual concept, as distinguished from a geographical entity, only after the romantics had finished their work. In the third and most important place, this work was subsequent to a long period of spiritual asceticism. I may be pardoned for hastening to remark that New England is not accused here of having mortified the flesh according to the recommendations of Saint Bernard. "Asceticism" properly means exercise, gymnastics; and the term may be applied to any kind of training which follows a code of rigid rules. Puritan America was not ascetic because it refrained from liquor and abstained from matrimony (it did neither of these things); it was ascetic because it strait-jacketed the soul. Having flung itself clean out of the orbit of European civilization, it went to America not to

get a fresh start or to seek pastures new, but to make absolute and omnipresent a few things it had decided to take along. The romantics were thoroughly tired of these things. Therefore they very properly set out looking for others, even though the marks of the thongs were upon them.

Inevitably the Romantic adventure led to the confines, sometimes to the interior, of the Catholic Church. One could not journey Europeward without encountering this Church, the biggest and most permanent fact there. Besides it so happened that the American Movement coincided more or less with a similar Movement then taking place on the Continent. Chateaubriand had risen to answer Voltaire, and it seemed that throngs of reawakening minster bells were applauding him. Memories of Europe's golden age had stirred thousands of men deeply and a hearty interest in liturgy was developing. In England the Oxford Movement, led by Newman and Keble, followed close on the heels of Walter Scott's descriptions of mediaeval pageantry. Philosophers in number were finding man more mysterious, at any rate more "transcendental," than the sages of the eighteenth century had been willing to concede. On all hands there was a bustling coming and going down intellectual roads, the scenery along which suddenly looked new and entrancing. Commerce of the spirit throve once more, and commerce stimulates life. That those Americans who were on the march

should have encountered all this was singular good fortune, even though they may not always have been experienced enough to profit by the exchange.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, aloof from the world in his Salem garret, turned the pages of the *Faerie Queene* and dreamed about life in terms of allegory. No other incident seems to reveal so much about the origins of American Romanticism. Spenser is, to begin with, the most authentic spokesman for the Renaissance in England. By comparison, both Chaucer and Shakespeare are meaty with island medievalism; Milton was born too late. Great, unhappy Spenser, however, expressed in his work the two essential facts of the Renaissance—its genius for colorful, naturalistic portraiture, and its discovery of Plato. The attempt to bridge these two fundamentally disparate things—the study of nature and an idealism which spurned the material—was audacious, and audacity is the keynote of the Renaissance. Spenser tempered it considerably, in the true English spirit. His magnificent poetry is a riot of color, but it has no architectonic ambitions. His Platonism is a doctrine of beauty and of love, but it is not a view of the world. For Spenser was also a Puritan, intellectually convinced that a reform of the human spirit was needed, and that it could be effected only by austerity and plainness.

We shall never get over marveling at the strange battle between the Renaissance and Puritanism in

the souls of very great Englishmen. Spenser stood with the reformers in so far as the intention of his work is concerned; but he was on common ground with Ariosto and Pico della Mirandola regarding matters of art-form and aspiration. A similar duality appears in Milton, but in him it can be more clearly distinguished. At all events the point to note is that our American Puritans had to engage in much the same battle. Hawthorne, dreaming over the pages of his poet, had a Puritan inheritance of character and mentality. His problem was to acquire the other heritage also—light and artistic form, imagination and the world's remembered beauty. And during those long years of Salem seclusion he became as much of a Platonist as Spenser had been, deepening his realization of the symbol (*The Scarlet Letter* is a symbol and little else), and acquiring that doctrine of love to which he gave such singularly noble expression. Unconscious though he probably was of the fact, Hawthorne's note-books contain the only passages in American literature which really rival Spenser's *Amoretti*. All this, however, did not make his blood less purely Puritan. To the end his concern was always with problems of character—with the good or evil purpose which the individual soul phrased, more or less of necessity, in terms of living.

It is a curious fact that though Hawthorne broadened immeasurably after his introduction to Europe, his work contracted and dried up until there was

nothing left of it. *The Marble Faun* is to some extent an epitome of his intellectual progress, of his slowly clarifying psychological views. Nevertheless he seems, in a measure, to have squeezed it out of himself; and it was certainly not the great romance he had dreamed of writing. His notebooks record over and over again an urge to take up the theme of the rich young man who refused to heed the invitation of Christ. And one may hazard the guess (one of which is equally as good as another) that Hawthorne, whose spirit had, in its pursuit of beauty, essayed a kind of rebellion against ancestral asceticism, returned in the end to the conviction that one thing alone is necessary—the fulfillment of the soul's destiny which perhaps, as Calvin had declared, is determined in advance. He came back to land out of which he had risen, accepting it without affection as a soldier accepts his place in battle, dimly understanding the fact that whatever is beautiful in modern European civilization is part of the allegory essayed by the Catholic faith—an allegory in which all things are sacred because they are so many varied incarnations of the desire of God.

That very personal Platonism with which Hawthorne had modified his assent to predestination became a kind of impersonal Platonism in the thought of his illustrious neighbor, Ralph Waldo Emerson. In Hawthorne nearly all human business is static, determined; in Emerson, everything acts and moves.

Even his language has a singular agility, darts about as if, like a swimmer's stroke, it were trying to win out over inertia. He began life with the conviction that humanistic material is useless unless it can be assimilated—which, of course, means "kept going"; he ended—or nearly so—with the belief that mankind is treated in a similar fashion by some higher power. This power, he felt, was most clearly discernible in nature, the economy and ceaseless advancement of which "reflected" to man the less material sphere in which he had been planted like a tree. If, therefore, man were willing to place his life entirely at the disposal of the "Spirit that lurks each form within," then his act would arrange itself "by irresistible magnetism in a line with the poles of the world." These "poles," he declared with more than Plato's optimism, are beneficent. "The Devil is an ass," but "Nature is loved by what is best in us."

From this Emerson went on to certain inevitable conclusions which, however, he was shrewd enough not to sketch sharply and intractably. If man is being guided by an idealistic force higher than himself, there is little sense in delaying to construct a number of landmarks or to conserve a host of recipes. "It is," he said, "a long way from granite to the oyster; further yet to Plato, and the preaching of the immortality of the soul." Why then should man try to fossilize himself, when the future is rich with undreamed of possibilities? Such fossilizations were

visible all about—forms of religious worship out of which all vitality had long since been drained; conventions of philosophy, which people repeated like so many parrots, ignoring the circumstance that philosophy is nothing if not a finding of convincing truth; conventions of government—mere "popular standards"—which forget that "all law is only a memorandum." Even grammar is mere sediment which Emerson could sweep out of the way magnificently with a gesture. How silly, therefore, to go around administering little tablets of reform, when health is only a matter of getting out of bed and facing the morning air.

Now in all of this there is a great deal of unrestrained individualism, of Fichte and Carlyle, of a philosophy not so far removed from pantheism. Nevertheless I am inclined to believe that it is several leagues nearer Catholic Christianity than it is to Puritanism. Consider, for instance, the emphasis which Emerson places upon life—life that, if man will but sense it coursing through his veins and not impair the instinct to aspire Divinely placed in it, "will exist with God today." How can such a principle be reconciled, with whatever modifications, with Calvinism? It is the essence of a spiritual determinism to believe that evil is ineradicable—that the stamp of weal or woe is upon every child of man, and that the good will spend their lives grimly eliminating everything except this stamp. A completely successful Cal-

vinist would be a person who knew nothing excepting that he was "saved." Emerson's whole gospel, however, reposes upon a constant act of choosing. This he does not explain clearly or profoundly, because he was neither theologian nor systematic philosopher. But he does say over and over again that nothing else can accomplish for man what he must do for himself—awake, have life, entrust himself to the Spirit of the world, develop self-reliance through surrender.

Understood somewhat differently and less vaguely localized, these Emersonian statements coalesce into a first principle of Catholic Christianity. One of the primary characteristics of the Saviour's doctrine is the stress which it lays upon life. "I am the resurrection and the life" is, perhaps, the best-known passage in the New Testament; and Christ expanded it in dozens of utterances and symbols. He spoke of Himself as the vine, of His kingdom as a tree growing, and of his disciples as fig-trees bringing forth good fruit. His charge against the Pharisees was that they were literalists, knowing not the robust vitality of the law. His most august legacy was, every Catholic believes, his body and blood—the bread and wine of unfailing, everlasting life. I grant that many have separated from the Roman Church because they were convinced, on the basis of what they observed in her representatives, that she was no longer virile and active. They have protested against

the occasional defaultings of her leaders. But that is really not pertinent. The point is simply this: It is the business of the Catholic faith to profess life as the cardinal principle of the soul, to nourish and safeguard that life, and to interest as many men as possible in it. Thomas a Kempis' maxim, "Blessed are the simple, for they shall have much peace," surely contains what is essential in this doctrine of Emerson.

It is also interesting to note that Emerson's confidence in the norms of nature is, for all practical purposes, the equivalent of that philosophy of "natural law" which has been incorporated so solidly with Catholic teaching. In both cases it is believed that a careful study of nature will reveal those rules which the Eternal Spirit has designed for the guidance of man. Emerson's point of view is in many respects quite individual, but after all he is not more replete with counsel derived from the "majestic beauties that daily wrap us in their bosom" than is St. Francis de Sales. Finally one should observe that the Emersonian indifference to accumulations of culture as ends sufficient unto themselves finds its only real exemplification on earth in the attitude of Catholicism. Whether that faith dwells in an environment Byzantine or Irish, Indo-European or Negroid, is a matter of secondary consequence. It may flourish in a republic as well as under a monarch, in a bleak desert as well as in a city embellished with all the

arts. Of course this attitude needs to be properly understood. Emerson was certainly deeply interested in culture; the Catholic faith is also interested in culture. Both have an especial liking for those things which are to some extent akin to what may be termed their "personalities." Both are anxious to bring about a time when man shall be "no longer a name for pity, for doubt, and for sensual indulgence." But neither would accept any particular culture as greater than man, as being in any particular sense as eternal as man. In other words, man has been given a forest, and is enslaved to no landscape.

I am wholly aware that as a thinker Emerson sturdily opposed dogma and did not assent to the reality of Revelation. But quite apart from the fact that he patently owes the more important of his trends of thought to his training and experience as a minister, he sought to complete the narrow creed of New England in the same way, though with far less reliable means, as Catholicism completes it. He escaped from the same kind of dogma that an integral Catholic escapes from—the dogma that God is not a force omnipresent for the ennobling of man, and that there are no signs of His goodness anywhere excepting in the law. Unfortunately his escape was too impetuous and directionless. He took no friend or guide. He closed his eyes to sacraments more precious and invigorating than daylight and the stars. The result was that in the end he really did not

know where he was going: Nirvana is the most exact definition mankind has formed of Nowhere. But as a recipe for the proper attitude of the soul in the face of the Universe—as a recipe for coming out of the caverns of Calvin—his doctrine is so acceptable that I greatly wonder why it is not more widely recommended.

Such a doctrine was really not a declaration of the independence of the American mind. There is precious little to show that Emerson cared much for that mind. Like every missionary, of course, he was thrilled by the vision of possibilities. But he smiled rather cynically at most of the queer folk who came to his door with their foolish and typically United States schemes; and when he had leisure for company after his own heart, he sought out the philosophers, heroes and poets of the old world, and he wrote their best sayings into his journals—until he came under the spell of the books of the East which Thoreau loaned him, and squeezed from them the one narcotic that could have dulled his soul. There was about the man a strange duality of shrewdness and mysticism, which is said to have been reflected in the peculiar difference between the two sides of his face. He had the Yankee gift for making things go, and the vision of the typical Saxon seer. But somehow the two things mingled in him until he became one of the truly important philosophers of his race. Beside him Josiah Royce is merely a professor and

William James only a master of diagnosis. He was not systematic, but neither was Leibnitz; he owed much to others, but so have all worth-while thinkers; he infused too much poetry into his doctrine, but that was a Romantic tendency. Emerson was the first great—perhaps the only great—prophet of the art of living to appear in America. He was also, it is almost necessary to note in these days, really an American.

This book makes no attempt to offer a comprehensive view of the nation's intellectual life. But the special point of view taken requires some reference to still another romantic, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. It is now good undergraduate form to speak patronizingly of his verse and his views. And yet a certain very legitimate reason for pride in the national past would be missing if there had been no Longfellow. He is our representative of a kind of mind which invariably appears whenever there is anything like a genuine cultural renaissance. In Italy of the fourteenth century he would have been a lesser Petrarch, possibly a worthy rival of Enea Silvio Piccolomini. Longfellow is the receptive poet who on the one hand is busy adapting and recasting the suddenly acquired treasures of a discovered promised land, and on the other hand eagerly listens to the language of the people—the "vernacular," as the old term phrases it.

In his case the treasure was that of a romantically

minded Christian Europe, eagerly making lyrics in the manner of Brentano and Eichendorff and quite as enthusiastically dreaming over the marvelous books of Dante and Calderon. Longfellow treated it all as a miser does gold. He does not seem to have computed its basic value, or to have been able to transmute it into possessions more intimately associated with his own personality. That is the fashion and the failing of his kind. Nevertheless he really did give America a great deal that was sorely needed. For the first time there appeared in this country a man who understood, creatively and not merely academically, that he possessed an artistic and humanistic inheritance. Through his generosity, for instance, we came to know something of the Mediterranean and its civilization; of the saints, whom Jacques de Voragine and others had made so exquisitely human; and of those cathedrals in which, during a more disillusioned time, Henry Adams would find surcease from the pressure of an intellectual vacuum. The whole of his effort is distinguished by nothing so much as sureness of touch where the greatest and yet most delicate of European realities—the historic Catholic tradition—is concerned. He had a gift for stepping out of New England into Christendom which one sincerely wishes some contemptuous moderns would acquire.

The voice of America, as Longfellow overheard it, was simple and relatively sentimental. It clings to a

curiously monotonous tone, whether one hears it in the lengthy aria of *Evangeline* or the brief song of *Maidenhood*. Temperate, gentle, hard-working, it seems to have very little in common with those spendthrift emotions which even the Bostonian newspapers of the time were alive with. And yet it is impossible not to feel that Longfellow listened well. He spoke the monologue, hushed until then, of a United States which still lived contentedly in small towns and to which rest after a day's labor and simple affection were treasured realities. It is not the language of a great man, but it is the speech of a truly great populace. In it there is more of discipline than of liberty, more of legitimate dreaming than of fate. For these reasons it has met with a truly remarkable welcome. I have listened to unsophisticated French country folk reading translations of Longfellow aloud; and it was easy to see that they not merely understood what was being said, but hearkened with a kind of happy reverence.

III

More cannot be said here regarding the American romantics. The movement in which they figured was really vast enough to embrace a multitude of diverse minds, and to spread over the entire country. I do think the three men whose work has been sketched hastily indicate its major characteristics and

show that there came into being something like an Anglo-American renaissance. This necessarily implied a looking forward as well as a glancing backward. New spiritual directions were needed for the nation that was slowly emerging from varied provincialisms. They could not, however, be staked out at random. It was essential to find some reliable compass, just as the political leaders of the Revolutionary Age had wisely consulted the history of government. The American renaissance naturally enough did not go back to Greece. In the first place, it was too English to do that kind of thing. In the second place, a reawakened Europe offered appealing and salutary example. That Europe, however, was everywhere colored with Catholicism; and it is not too much to say that Puritan New England saw a Concord Movement which was in many respects a shadow of the Oxford Movement. Of course for the most part it kept firmly aloof from the Catholic Church, but it took so many lessons and so much beauty from that Church, directly or indirectly, that one may safely declare that American literature and thinking in the "golden age" would have been entirely different had not its great proponents encountered Catholicism.

But just as they made only a relative approach to traditional Christendom, so also their address to the nation was merely tentatively successful. There is something in the often repeated statement that they

were potted with what is termed "Mid-Victorianism." The kind of idealism which in England was attempting to reconcile progress and poverty, spiritual doubt and optimism, attempted in America to erase unprepossessing realities out of its picture of the world. Yankee intelligence was conscious of social and economic ills, but its solution for them was Dr. George Ripley's Brook Farm, where one simply forgot the ills for the sake of the idylls. By comparison, the rude and untutored Tammany Hall of the time was immeasurably closer to the facts. Out of the whole Civil War there came not one brutal picture of the real fight. Lincoln must have had the terrible actuality close to his heart when he wrote the Gettysburg Address; yet even he never uttered a stark word about it. Mrs. Stowe made great drama out of slavery, but her Uncle Tom and Little Eva, her Topsy and Simon Legree, live on the stage with a world more of ease than they ever did on a plantation. Hawthorne approached the world of sex, but one has a feeling that his most vividly realized woman—Zenobia, in *The Blithedale Romance*—never made a critical study of her own knee.

It is, however, surely more to the point that New England had laboriously to grind its spiritual lenses before it could hope to see reality. And if the work it so earnestly undertook had ever been properly completed, we should undoubtedly have arrived at a clearer, more comprehensive view of life and the

world as they are than anything we have managed to attain. But in the critical hour which followed the Civil War and the deaths of Thoreau, Hawthorne and Emerson, a number of things happened which inevitably had revolutionary consequences. One of these was largely just a matter of social readjustment. The War released a flood of practical energy which used the symbol "Union" to create an unparalleled enthusiasm for expansion. Great railways and industrial innovations; radical improvements in agricultural machinery and the discovery of vast national resources; the coming to age of immigrant throngs and the appearance of a new type of leadership:—all these and more tended to draw the nation's attention from idealistic concerns to questions of dollars and sense. Emerson's proud phrase, "The world is builded on ideas; not on cotton and iron," had gone distinctly out of style. As a result, the political integrity which had almost invariably distinguished federal government waned until, during General Grant's presidency, morality was a thing never mentioned out loud in Washington for fear of frightening somebody. The chivalry of the South, exemplified by the conduct of Robert Lee and the poetry of Lanier, kept the flame of aspiration flickering. But philosophy perished so completely that one might well have wondered if it had been forbidden by statute.

Under such favorable conditions a new rational-

ism was bound to prosper. A series of men who "looked straight down the barrel" and refused to be fooled began to appear one by one. Intellectually they indicated, of course, a return to eighteenth-century standards and prepossessions. Nevertheless there was a decided difference. Benjamin Franklin's deism and scientific interests, his satire and his worldliness, had been flavored with a genuine altruism which the newer positivists generally despised. It is true they believed in human progress with a rare firmness, and stroked their constantly increasing machines with affection. But even a wide awake contemporary spectator of what they were doing might have guessed the ultimate outcome—a landscape so denuded of beauty that it bespeaks the barbarian; an almost infinite natural wealth bottled up and possessed by a few; the rise of industrial cities and the frank acceptance of class warfare; and, ultimately, the weakening of the appeal of religion to such an extent that sixty out of every hundred citizens would profess no attachment to any creed.

Within academic and intellectual circles, leadership passed to men trained in German universities and combining, apart from their exact scholarship in philology or science, Neo-Kantian philosophy with more or less of the program of Young Germany. It is no mere coincidence that William James' crystallization of American thought looked very much like, in its technical aspects, two German summaries of

modern speculation—the psychology of Wundt and the pragmatic ethics of Vaihinger. With this there also came higher criticism of the Scriptures, a boundless confidence in the theory of evolution as a doctrine which satisfactorily explained the whole of man and his world, a tendency to regard almost every human problem as essentially economic in character, and—though not to any great extent—a demand for frankness in literature and the arts. One might easily show, if there were time, that the first critics to apply the adjective "brummagem" to American fiction and to point out the ethereal texture of American poetic literature were men who had learned to know, as university students, the meaning of German naturalism—just as the men who later on proposed and established the United States edition of that doctrine of naturalism—Dreiser, Lewisohn and others—were inspired by the Teutonic trend.

In all this there was, no doubt, much of value and much that was inevitable. But it was a process of grafting and not at all a renaissance. It merely put up the building which the materialistic character of the time called for. One may see the point most clearly, perhaps, by visualizing the personal adventures of representative men; and of these Mark Twain will best serve our purpose. Born of simon-pure American stock (religion included) in a river town unaffected by any of the New England heresies, he came out of the Civil War and into man-

hood at a time when the business of expansion was at its height. His temperament was fully adequate to the time. A skeptical attitude towards people and conventions, a culture recorded by his own notation that he liked facts and scientific information but had no use for poetry and theology, a visionary fondness for money to be made and glory to be gained, an instinct for drollery which concealed a fundamental loneliness and almost mystical uprightness of soul —all these were characteristics of Samuel Clemens, who took soundings in the stream of the epoch with the same skill (and under the same sign) as he had gauged the Mississippi.

His attitude toward America was the attitude any man has toward a going concern in which he is a partner. There were inefficiencies to be got rid of—the nonsense of chivalry, for instance. There were queer types to reckon with, and certain crudenesses to live down perhaps; but the spirit behind the national business as a whole was sound and right: it was interested in facts, in equality, in solid rewards for accomplishment; and it was in a fair way to smash fictions. For Europe he has practically no understanding, failing to realize that some preparation might be needed for insight into the rich symbolism which thousands of crowded years had used to give expression to their experience and aspiration. Any civilized man of today who contrasts the Mark Twain records of voyages to Europe with what Emerson

jotted down in his journal regarding England and the Mediterranean towns he visited, can almost measure the intellectual descent which the first exemplified. It was something more than ignorance or democratic prejudice; it was really a definite debasement of the spirit. It was as if one half of the English soul had suddenly burst into drunken laughter at the other half.

Nevertheless Samuel Clemens was too great a man to escape payment for his revel. Little by little his eye, having been dedicated to reality, grasped the truth about his own particular segment of space and time. Though for reasons—or inhibitions—largely personal in character, he dwarfed the Swift or Rabelais that might have risen within him, he struck out angrily with whips considerably more virulent than that misanthropy of Tolstoi which William Dean Howells had diluted for United States consumption. The final Mark Twain was no longer protected by his mantle of fun. Lonely as only those can be who live hating powerlessly, he wrote of humanity as if it were an enterprise gone to smash. For all the irreverence which seems to underlie *The Mysterious Stranger,* it is not impossible to see in it one of those "dark nights of the soul" to which only a mystic can succumb. That mystic in Samuel Clemens spoke also in his book about Joan of Arc, which he fondly hoped was the best of his works, but which in all truth lays

bare that lack of culture and of ability to fathom spiritual purpose to which the man was doomed. A Catholic sees this failure as consonant with that singular error which caused Mark Twain's business collapse. He had believed, William Dean Howells tells us, that every Catholic would have to buy a *Life of Pope Leo XIII* under pain of mortal sin!

Singularly little in the American rationalistic half-century suggested an approach to Catholic tradition. It was, true enough, the period of greatest Catholic numerical growth, because of the ingress of immigrants and the expenditure of vast sums to build churches and schools, hospitals and institutions, for them. The Church lost heavily from defections, as it always does when the spirit of the time is against it. Nevertheless the Catholic effort to conserve was much more successful than it might have been reasonable to expect, owing very largely to a willingness to dwell apart from the national scene and to take refuge in memories and purposes brought from the Old World. The Irish immigrant who often got no farther than questionable politics in this country, kept the dream of Erin warm in his heart. Germans and French, clinging to their languages with tenacity, were often nearer intellectually to Ratisbon and Munich than to Chicago. This was not a way to conquer America, but one must admit that in some respects it was good for the soul.

IV

I should not like to conclude this exceedingly sketchy chapter without returning to pick up a thread. The goals mapped out by the great romantics did not completely disappear from view. Though in the nature of things the campaign for money in which America engaged with such fervor that it changed every institution and every form of endeavor was bound to triumph over the spiritualizations of life which the New Englanders had proposed, it could not wholly halt that impetus to a renaissance they had so sincerely and forcefully given. Others came to take up the work anew. These understood, however, both the definite, concrete character of the things they wished to get away from, and the equally definite, concrete character of the things to which they hoped to arrive. They had seen paganism in the flesh, triumphing on the boulevards, and intolerance incarnate, drying up whole sections of the country, like a torrid wind. Experience had revealed to them the dissolution of the American community, in which "what the people want" is the governing principle, but in which there is never any "people" to want anything. For a people is properly not a mob of undisciplined individuals, out to glut an appetite or to gratify an instinct, but a community which some power of the soul has marked with a

common stamp. Finally they saw that "Young Germany" would not do, because "Young Germany" was already old, rheumatic and demodé.

There is no place here to outline the adventures of Henry Adams, Louise Imogen Guiney, or Ralph Adams Cram. The first sought out mediaeval cathedrals that he might give form to his doctrine of American disillusionment; the last hunted through these same minsters for a doctrinal fundament upon which to build not merely a community architecture but a community itself. Perhaps there is danger in too strong an affection for mediaevalism. Perhaps the romantic spirit does not wholly overcome a certain anemia inherent in it until it is content to immerse itself in contemporary reality. It is properly the leaven rather than the bread. Grant all this and the fact remains: we are so sorely in need of a standard of comparison—of, if you like, a pattern upon which our national renaissance can be worked out—that a fuller understanding of Christian civilization as expressed continuously in European history is priceless and even indispensable. During 1926 American progress towards this understanding was attested to by the foundation, at Harvard University, of the Mediaeval Academy of America. The officers of this foundation have explained their purpose in appropriate language. I believe one may rightly aver, however, that they are continuing the work begun by Lowell, Ticknor, Longfellow and

others during the heyday of New England's intellectual life.

To this one must add the renewed interest in Mediterranean culture fostered by scholars of many kinds and purposes. Roused to action by almost endless evidence for an ignorance and narrowness of mind that seem characteristic of American life, they welcomed the impact of European cultures upon their own. Anybody who sees with what determination the leaders of scholarly institutions have opened their doors to the world and have refused to consider isolating the spirit of research within the narrow nationalistic limits, will abandon any grave charge he may wish to bring against the open-mindedness of contemporary American learning. It is true that our schools are still too much in awe of successful commercialism; but what institution can escape this charge nowadays? It is likewise a fact that many individual teachers and investigators are pompous little egoists, whose neckbands are their horizons. But on the whole the American scholar—when he is really a scholar—comes as near to realizing the ideal of magnanimity as anybody listed on the census books. Certainly the Catholic has every reason to recognize this fact. Should he have a point of view to defend, he can get a hearing. Should he write a book—even a relatively apologetic book—he is likely to find as many sympathetic readers outside his communion as inside.

I have no desire to draw rash conclusions from this little survey of the voyage of the American mind. It began by trying to adopt the viewpoint of an imaginary Catholic spectator, new to our life as a nation and eager to understand it. Such a spectator would find, I believe, that the most significant attempts made by the national spirit to create a home for itself in this new land have always ended by earnestly striving to take the treasure of Catholic tradition into their purview. American experience of the nobler sort has been a constant process of getting better acquainted with the work of the Church, though naturally enough in a humanistic rather than in a theological sense. This fact has not always been understood. It may even appear novel and unbelievable to many people. The best way to substantiate it is, perhaps, to see what Catholic experience has been in America.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CATHOLIC SPIRIT IN AMERICA

I

"THEY went forth to battle, but they always fell," Mr. Shaemas O'Sheel's beautiful epitaph for his own people, comes to mind as one tries to summarize what pioneer Catholic effort accomplished in the United States. The early missionaries had accepted a version of the Indian more romantic than Cooper's or Chateaubriand's. They came to the red-skin convinced they would meet "nature's nobleman," who needed only the light of Christian faith to become the builder of a new civilization, better, purer than anything then existing in the Old World. He had lived close to the earth, in solitude; he worshipped the Great Spirit; and he had not been ravaged in body and soul by the insidious modern plagues. This generous opinion both reality and the trend of events conspired to prove mistaken. Nevertheless generosity is the greatest of virtues as well as the most charming of traits. To a large extent, the Spanish and French missionaries failed; but their attempt—so much like

the similarly unsuccessful cathedral of Beauvais or the mission of St. Francis to the Saladin—is priceless to the memory; it, indeed, the noblest footprint ever left on American sands. The California missions have been corroded by two or three gold-rushes; the Indian has left scarce a feather behind on the hills where the French Jesuits lighted candles for the Sacred Sacrifice; one's thought of Florida now seldom concerns itself with much more than high-priced beaches and failures in real-estate:—but those who have a feeling for glory achieved on this soil turn to these shadowy places as to nowhere else in the New World, and are convinced that there alone can a believer in civilization hear undeceptive joy-bells ring.

In many ways the annals of the French Jesuits are the most interesting portion of American history. Parkman found in them the materials for his luminous sketches of the colonial past; from reading them the Church has learned to know several of her saints. I think all of us might well take the time to consider a little the idea which they were bent on realizing amid the forests, the plains and the snows of a vast wilderness. It was an idea having nothing in common with force or intolerance. They solemnized marriages wedding the French voyageur to an Indian girl; they gave their lives heroically, but exacted no life in return; and while they retained so firmly the Ignatian ideal of learning that their

records of places, people and things observed is the first great American scientific achievement, they tempered their doctrine and their system of education to the cruder needs of a new land. Even after the French territories had been ceded to the United States, the Jesuits stayed with the Indian, accompanying him on those long and mournful journeys westward during the course of which missionary and young chieftain often succumbed together to some fatal fever and were buried side by side. The life-story of such a man as Père Allouez, who devoted himself so entirely to the Red-skins that his death and burial among them are facts upon which investigation can shed no light, is an indication of what these really great men were ambitious to attain.

The whole gamut of radical and social contemptuousness was as unfamiliar to them as the score of Beethoven is to an oriole. They were, it is true, servants to French builders of empire. Accepting every advance of the fleur-de-lis with rejoicing, they nevertheless dreamed of taking nothing at an unfair price. They reckoned with the Indian as part and parcel of the civilization that would be, and they reckoned so well that their coming was never a signal for him to depart. When one contrasts this magnanimity with the callous advance of the Anglo-Saxon, one realizes in what different meanings the word "democracy" may be employed. The New Englander undoubtedly possessed a less monarchical and hieratic

form of political government; but it never occurred to him to grant the human equality of all men. To the Jesuit, a naked savage was not merely one more soul to save, but really and truly a potential builder of a new civilization. It was folly, perhaps, but it was obviously not robbery or war.

That is why the observant New Englander has always found the story of French achievement so much more fascinating than his own. Parkman told John Gilmary Shea, the historian of the American Catholic Church, that he had been forced to underscore his narratives with little peppery allusions to "bigotry," in order to render his work palatable to its audience. Yet even as he tells it, the story has the sweep and fire of an immortal epic, by comparison with which the little businesses and inhibitions of Boston look like episodes in Anthony Trollope. Some day we shall appreciate the whole grandeur and beauty of it. At present, I am sorry to say, it seems that American Catholics themselves are the ones least interested in accepting the Jesuit record as a memorial and an exemplar.

The Spanish padres who followed the banners of the *conquistadores* were occasionally able to realize more of the missionary dream. They were also by no means always exempt from martyrdom. As early as 1520, Luis de Barbastro, who had labored as an apostle among the natives of Yucatan, was killed by a savage at Tampa, Florida. From that time forward,

Jesuits, Dominicans and Franciscans worked untiringly to establish missions in what are now Georgia and Florida. In some places the ruins of buildings erected by them have been discovered and studied by scholars, but for the most part our remembrance of what they accomplished is based upon a written history that few know. In 1612, before even a single Pilgrim had arrived to give fame to his illustrious rock, a Franciscan province had been established with a mother-house at St. Augustine. The more conservative chroniclers estimate that some years later the number of Indians ministered to was 26,000; and it is known that the bishop of Santiago de Cuba gave the Sacrament of Confirmation to more than one thousand during a single visitation. Numerous missionaries were put to death. Some fell as victims to the wrath of Drake, who hanged peaceful Franciscans in honor of the British flag with all the gusto of a true pirate. Others died at the hands of Indians, and still others were slain during the course of the struggle which finally ended when the English took possession of the South Atlantic seaboard. Their faith went hand in hand with the charity that does good works. Schools and places of refuge, patiently erected by them, make Anglo-Saxon claims about civilization in the South seem as preposterous as any upstart's talk of a family tree.

It is nevertheless true that all this work came to an end before it could arrive at maturity. By com-

parison the achievement inaugurated by Fray Junipero Serra in California impresses us as old and mellow. Those who have stood beneath the olive trees—the first in the land—planted at San Diego by this most humble of the Lord's servants, need not be told that they suggest the august qualities of Umbria, forever sacred by reason of the Franciscan crusade of love. Fray Junipero had come across Mexico and the burning desert barefoot, retaining from this hardy enterprise a life-long lameness. But it was really the only way for a man like him to come—traveling as the Indians did, with no other gold than the stars. What he created, literally out of nothing, is a familiar story. In it, too, there is the same charity and spiritual democracy, the same patient imitation of Christ, which so luminously transfigure all the beginnings of American Catholicism. Fray Junipero brought the Indians faith, a culture they could understand, and hope for the morrow. We who can see better than he could the beauty and practicableness of San Gabriel and San Juan Capistrano, know that his work, though ended long ago, will continue to enlighten the world.

No glance at the early American Church, however cursory, can overlook the part played by the clergy of France in the winning of American independence. When Franklin had succeeded in persuading the government of Louis XVI that aid given to the Revolutionary cause would be a sound na-

tional investment (idealistically, at least), it was immediately decided that assistance would be financial as well as military in character. The royal treasury, however, was characterized by that emptiness peculiar to kingly bank balances when a revolution is close at hand. Louis therefore convened the clergy and asked them to contribute the necessary sums so that no further burden would be laid upon the people. The response was unhesitating and generous. Prelates and priests contributed millions of dollars, a respectable portion of which went to the Continental Government as "free gifts," no repayment of which was ever expected. How much these donations accomplished for the cause of American freedom anyone can estimate who speculates upon the difference between the mutinous and famine-stricken soldiers whom Washington huddled together at Valley Forge and the triumphant army which accepted the surrender of the British after Yorktown.

Here once again history recorded a fact which blends naturally with the whole of Catholic tradition in the United States. Not only has that tradition avoided conflict with the development of popular government in a new land, but it has everywhere constantly aided that development unselfishly and for the loftiest motives. Neither the French or the Spanish were destined to take a prominent part in the nation's growth, and it is possibly better they did not. But in so far as we can think of the Indian

without shame, it is because of the good they labored to accomplish. They are also creators, for us, of that illustrious romance without which the vista upon which we gaze back would be singularly barren and unsuggestive.

II

What was the Catholic share in the civilization fostered by the Anglo-American settlers? To some extent this question is crucial for our present purpose, because of the assumption, prevalent among those who are anxious to create an American caste, that the actual labor of building up these United States was uniquely a Protestant affair. I have made it sufficiently clear, I hope, that this book is not an attempt to steal from the Puritan or anybody else the credit to which he is legitimately entitled. On the other hand it is only reasonable to expect that the public ear will be quite as eager to welcome the narrative of what English Catholic pioneers and their successors managed to accomplish. This narrative may profitably be divided into two parts, the first of which relates to colonization that was solidly and frankly Catholic, the second of which has to do with the Catholic share in the American renaissance, particularly in New England.

Everybody knows that during the spring of 1634 Leonard Calvert, representing his brother the Lord

Baltimore, landed with a group of Catholic colonists and began the settlement of St. Mary's, Maryland. The government was firmly established in 1636; and from then until 1649, every governor was made to swear "that he would not, by himself or another, directly or indirectly, trouble, molest or discountenance, any person professing to believe in Jesus Christ, for or in respect of religion; that he would make no difference of person, in conferring offices, favors or rewards, for or in respect of religion, but merely as they should be found faithful and well-deserving, and endued with moral virtues and abilities; that his aim should be public unity, and that if any person or officer should molest any person, professing to believe in Jesus Christ, on account of his religion, he would protect the person molested and punish the offender."

It was the first manifesto of the principle of tolerance in America. No one believing in Jesus Christ (and in those days not to believe in Him was to place oneself outside the pale of society) was to be persecuted or penalized for adhering to some specific creed or none. To some extent Lord Baltimore may have been governed by prudence in announcing this singularly liberal policy; but there is plenty of evidence to show that he and the men who followed him had been convinced by the trend of events in England that mutual forbearance alone promised peace and advancement in the domain of religion. He went

even farther, and by insisting firmly upon absolute separation between Church and State in Maryland shocked more than a little the good Jesuits of the colony, who had been prepared for such a doctrine neither by the custom of states nor by the rules of canon and civil law. And so the Calverts became, more than a century prior to the Virginia Bill of Rights, sponsors and supporters of a principle which has now become so firmly embedded in American life that most of us accept it as casually as we do the rising of the sun.

What followed is not pleasant history, and a mere reference to it will suffice here. During 1649 a band of Puritans, forced to leave Virginia because of their incompatibility with the Established Church, were given a grant of land at Annapolis. No sooner had they settled than they refused to abide by the agreement made prior to their coming—a promise to take the oath of allegiance to the Maryland government. Their reasons were characteristic. The word "royal" occurred in the text of the oath, and also some allusion to the Roman Catholic religion. For a while they were placated by certain changes made to humor them, but by 1651 they had become so certain of Cromwell's triumph that they refused to elect delegates to the colonial Assembly. Two years later they addressed a petition to Richard Bennett and William Claiborne, Cromwellian commissioners for the colonies of Maryland and Vir-

ginia, complaining of a state of affairs under which they were obliged to swear "absolute subjection to a government where the ministers of state are bound by oath to countenance and defend the Roman Popish religion." Thereupon the commissioners arrived with armed forces and, in 1654, convened a legislature which deprived Catholics of "protection" under the law. The rest of the story is largely the record of a struggle which ended, under William and Mary, with the setting up of the Established Church in Maryland, to which the contumacious Puritans were obliged to pay tribute. Thus began and ended the first episode in the history of American tolerance—an episode which more than faintly suggests a parallel with some developments in our own time.

The Catholic stock which Lord Baltimore had planted in Maryland lived on and increased. Charles Carroll—who added "of Carrollton" to his signature at the bottom of the Declaration of Independence so that British wrath might not mistake its man—came of it. Later on it participated in the great migration westward, settling in Kentucky about 1785 and going from there to other places. The history of this great journey has never been satisfactorily written, but one can trace it to some extent by the remains which testify to its individuality. At Bardstown, amidst farm lands that were certainly not remarkably productive, the Marylanders built a little city which soon became the seat of a bishopric and

the center to which various religious orders came. They preserved the best virtues of their stock and created the one typically English Catholic culture in the United States. No men have had a better right to the title "American," and none have ever taken greater pride in it.

The Spaldings are, perhaps, the best and most typical representatives of this variety of Catholic culture. Archbishop Martin J. Spalding and his nephew, Archbishop John Lancaster Spalding, were prelates who combined the vision of two advances—that of the Church and that of the nation—throughout their lives. As a theologian, historian and director of ecclesiastical affairs, the first restored to the old see of Baltimore the ideals of the sturdy folk who had first made Maryland possible. He also typified for Europe the American churchman that was to be—loyal, generous, public-spirited, not querulous. His nephew, renowned of course for much purely religious work, was also the first outstanding intellectual voice of Catholics in this country. Dealing intelligently and helpfully with the social problems which made their appearance soon after the close of the Civil War—labor, education, democratic culture—he combined age-old principles with an understanding of the here and now. We still relish his courteous, lapidary literary style; the justness of his vision; and the quality of his citizenship which, bred to the traditions of which the United States

may justly be proud, was also, every inch, a Catholic citizenship.

If these are representative instances of the development of which pioneer Catholic stock proved capable,—and they are by no means isolated instances —the coming over of staunch American Protestants to the Church is no less colorful and significant a proof that the religion institutionalized in Europe during centuries did not spoil or slaughter souls in the New World. I have no brief to offer for the convert. It is entirely apart from my purpose here to uphold the reasonableness of his step, or to defend him against accusations of improper motivation. The men and women who in New England (and to a considerable extent elsewhere) voluntarily entered the Catholic society may have been hopelessly misguided, so far as I am here concerned. All I claim is this: their conversion, far from weakening the Americanism to which they had a clear title by reason of birth, breeding and spiritual heritage, strengthened their desire to serve the nation, to defend and develop the principles to which it had been officially pledged, and to give of themselves that others might live more abundantly. In a word, they did not attain to the full stature of their Americanism until they joined the Church.

The very origins of Catholicism in New England are associated with the willingness of certain eminent convert families to make great sacrifices for it.

But although beginnings are always something, and immigration—chiefly Irish—had swelled the number of Catholics resident in the United States to a number which John Gilmary Shea estimated as having been 1,726,470 in the year 1850, it was a formidable step which the New Englander of the Emersonian period took when he entered the Church. Many came, nevertheless; and among them were two whom later epochs naturally regard as especially typical. Orestes Brownson was certainly one of the most inquisitive and relentlessly intellectual men of his time, vehemently given to constructive change though that was. Successively a Presbyterian, a Universalist, an Owenite, a Unitarian minister, a Saint-Simonian pamphleteer, a follower of Matthew Arnold's "new dispensation" and a spiritist, he had some right to believe that he had looked for the things of the soul in about every place where it was thought they might be hidden. His final acceptance of Catholicism was an act for the sincerity of which he gave testimony during many penitential days. It was not easy in those times to be the lay theologian, editor, critic and pamphleteer which Brownson was during many years; and I believe that the change from a spiritual world in which there had been the glorious bustle of Concord thinking and Brook Farm experimenting to the narrow little universe of a timid and provincial Catholicism often bruised his soul. Nevertheless he stood his ground to the end, setting

an example of fortitude that deserves a fame it has never received, and incidentally stating his political creed—*The American Republic*—with a subtlety and breadth truly remarkable.

Orestes Brownson justified his faith in the Church and his confidence in the nation. His friend Isaac Hecker attempted a grandiose synthesis of the two. Perhaps the dream was too magnificent; at any rate Hecker, graduating from Brook Farm into a Catholic religious community, nursed in his heart a program of action which generations have not sufficed to carry out beyond the initial stages. Time and time again he was rudely beaten by his own idealistic temperament, by the failure of others to understand, and by the tremendous enmity of the age itself. And yet, though there are written estimates of Father Hecker which talk of him with niggardly cynicism, it is hard to understand how any American can fail to be deeply stirred by the work Isaac Hecker laid out for himself and the spirit in which he undertook it. His hope was to draw out from the increasingly large body of American Catholics such a treasure of creative intelligence and artistic feeling, such a blossoming of spiritual insight and charity, that the nation round about would catch fire in a salutary way. He was clear-sighted enough to see that the New England renaissance was not going to be the saving contagious flame; and though his own hope was also not realized, a thousand times more of its effect is today

concretely visible than there is of inherited Bostonian idealism. From nothing did the man suffer more than from certain hasty, misguided accusations of "Americanism," and of nothing was he more conscious than of the quality of his citizenship.

It may well be noted that neither of these two men—or the many notable others who, like Elizabeth Seton, moved in the same spiritual direction—were at all of the type which rushes to Catholic cathedrals for aesthetic satisfaction. They were logical, truth-seeking, workaday, dogmatic people. There was a brief era, notable particularly in California, when love of ecclesiastical beauty drew some poets into the Church. But for the most part American aesthetes, though they can tell you all about the "charm" of Catholic ritual and, like some contemporary refined Hebraic souls, can make you as sick of their adjectives as ever you get of too much incense, have resolutely avoided taking the fatal step. The lovers of beauty in New England's great day sincerely admired Catholic things and sometimes—as in the cases of Longfellow and even Lowell—spoke intelligently about them. But the men and women who went the whole and often tragic distance were earnest folk intent upon accepting truth when they believed it had been offered them and devoted likewise to the nobler purposes of their country.

And yet this movement towards the Church in the "great epoch" was not a dour thing comprised of syl-

logisms but vibrant and vital, characterized not a little by the "romantic" fervor which then was moving round the earth. The influence of Cardinal Newman upon it, for instance, is difficult to overestimate. His attempt to awaken Oxford roused and modified many an American Anglican heart. It also fortified numerous souls newly become Catholic. So often does one come across it—in John Banister Tabb and James Kent Stone, for instance—that one is forced to believe an important part of the history of the Oxford Movement still remains to be written. This fact is noted here as further evidence that the Americans who accepted the Catholic idea were neither esoteric nor sterile, but truly alive. And if they were thoroughly convinced that the faith gained in bitter combat might prove a beneficent force in the renaissance of their country, it was at least partly because they had really grown up with that country and learned to know what it was.

I cannot refrain from ending these brief remarks about men who were essentially of American stuff, despite all flighty assertion to the contrary, with some reference to the figure who adorns most enlightened dithyrambs about our quality and destiny as a people. Walt Whitman has become, for many, the apotheosis of democracy, because he happened to be a barbarian! No conception could, of course, more pitilessly travesty him. Essentially the man was not even tentatively wild; in his heart he was tame, with

that mammoth tameness which is sentimental, tearful and unsteady. Had he been a four-square savage, he would have swallowed beauty without losing his presence of mind; had he been a soldier he would have saluted Lincoln with a silent quatrain, as Tabb saluted Damien; had he been something of a pioneer, he would hardly have applauded himself. Walt Whitman, both as moralist and poet, was the creature of that ultimate refinement which we call leisure. He was prodigal with the stars because he had never been obliged to walk with the stars in their orbits. But it is quite true that he was tall enough to reach the stars—a circumstance which Americans generally have neither understood nor forgiven.

We have neither understood nor forgiven because the man was not one of us. America has been a giant swarm of immigrants thumbing vast spaces for a page on which to scrawl:—an uprooted swarm hunting multitudinous hives, carrying the hastily sorted baggage of lost cities, and marked with a simplicity that on the one hand was greed and on the other an earnest spiritual fidelity. It is no wonder that our fathers were stripped clean and made to look at loveliness as something not to be clutched, while they stalked the buffalo as they stalked each other—excepting when they made an inventory of those holiest and most wise of platitudes, which we call traditions. And certainly it is no wonder that Walt understood them not at all—Walt half asleep by

the sea, rifling the cargoes of the great romantics and guzzling the wine of Shelley like a new god Pan. He was the maker of a bacchanalian threnody. His was a stave in the song Europe had been giddy with since the days of Rousseau.

III

The United States was destined to become the immigrant's work-shop. The Catholic Church was destined to become the immigrant's church. During the course of this astounding, quite unparalleled adventure, the issue narrowed into a query: Could the Church in caring for the immigrant spiritually, cooperate with the nation which was necessarily intent upon improving him civically? If this question could not be answered affirmatively—and there have been numerous occasions when some persons hastened to answer it in the negative—then Catholicism had really entered a country where it did not belong. In our present day and age, however, the nature of the correct reply has become so clear that the "No's" combine a great deal of caution with more than a relative indifference to history. Of course it is not yet altogether clear. Let us admit cheerfully that we are still not in a position to know how the final balance sheet of the immigration epoch will look, and that the Church in America has still to surmount many of the handicaps which this epoch imposed upon it.

Immigration is always more than a change of position. Normally it means going from a crowded space into an empty space—from a world crammed so tight that all kinds of rules are needed to render movement safe and even possible, into a world where one can walk arms akimbo without brushing against a soul. In the second place, there are reasons why the immigrant goes. Perhaps economic or social conditions have made life intolerable, as is likely to be the case when destructive wars, revolutions or industrial changes have occurred. Again, a group of persons may find themselves *non gratæ* for some reason or other, and so practically forced to seek a living elsewhere. Finally, there may exist a desire to migrate, dependent upon any one of a dozen motives ranging from lofty idealism to a gross confidence that there will be more to eat for less work. At any rate immigration is not all of one piece, although it always implies trading a routine to which one has grown accustomed for newer and relatively freer conditions.

The circumstances thus hastily sketched profoundly influenced the settlement of the United States and therefore also the work of the Church. Customs which had prevailed in European homelands were abandoned in the new world, often at a serious loss of moral and social safeguards. More important, however, is the fact that the country absorbed so many who were penniless, who possessed the culture

that goes with destitution, and who were interested first of all in improving their fortunes. These men and women proved easy marks for rapacious employers, both as bond-servants and later on as factory slaves. Our contemporary social order bears many a scar that had in its origin in this process of brutalization; and it is certainly (let us note in passing) a blessing for the white race that negro slavery saved it from the degradation of old-fashioned plantation drudgery. Finally, though we were fortunate in getting settlers who virtually exiled themselves for treasured ideals (and we got them from Germany, Poland and Ireland as well as from England), we also took in crowds of degenerate wretches whom old world governments were glad to get off their hands. In a word, the impact of immigration upon American institutions was really so heavy that they were often in danger of collapse.

When Washington arrived in New York to take the inaugural oath, the Catholic Church was certainly not prepared to meet the demands that would soon be placed upon it. It constituted a sorry and timid minority. Although the first Amendment to the federal constitution went far towards guaranteeing freedom of religious worship, many of the states recognized established churches in accordance with the practice of British law, and some specifically pointed a finger of reproof at Roman Catholics. Owing to the watchfulness of Mr. John Jay, New York state

required its subjects to "abjure" foreign priests and potentates, even in matters ecclesiastical. Groups of the faithful kept on existing, of course, but there is no doubt that thousands were lost in every state through lack of priests. Mr. Michael O'Brien, the tireless scribe of the American Irish Historical Society, estimates that a heavy percentage of those whom later genealogists would patriotically label "Scotch-Irish," Presbyterian wise, were scions of old families whose orthodoxy might have been vouched for by St. Columba himself. Rome, of course, knew very little about the infant United States, and even if it had the French Revolution and other matters were quite enough to absorb its attention.

Nor is this everything. Such ecclesiastics and laymen as were on the scene had lost practically all idea of ecclesiastical organization and discipline. They were not only without bishops but feared that acquiring one or two might be the signal for a massacre as well as an uncomfortable financial burden. Moreover the flame of democratic ardor which rose high during the "Citizen Genêt" days blazed furiously under more than one biretta and trustee cloak. A cynical spectator might well have fancied that the Catholic Church was bent on proving itself a useless nuisance. But in 1790 Father John Carroll, a singularly holy, humble and tactful man whom non-Catholics can form a better idea of if they think of Bishop Asbury, was consecrated first bishop of the

American Church. His story is that of a bitter, heart-rending struggle for unity, but it is the story of constructive work. At its close there stood, unmistakable and clear, the word "Beginning."

The tide came and the Church proved fortunate in two respects. First, the major groups of Catholic immigrants were poor, often illiterate and sometimes very coarse, but they were people accustomed to making sacrifices for their convictions. Upon the heroic loyalty of Irish, German and French peasants, the Catholic structure could be reared as upon rock. It is not my purpose to eulogize these folk, among whom my own ancestors were. But it may be said of them that they were the sap of Europe, brave, spirited, unspoiled people whom no builder of empire would have turned away. Nine tenths of what the Church has accomplished in the United States is due to them—a tribute which shows clearly enough for all to see the democratic character of American Catholic growth. Secondly, there was soon no dearth of idealistic priests and religious, some of whom were princes, nobles and scholars in their home countries, to take up the work of direction. It can safely be said that no other class of immigrants drew after them so many of Europe's best as did the Catholics. More than one French seigneur and Austrian count labored in the wilderness as a missionary of the Church, riding cheerfully on farm wagons, breast-

ing storms and snows, sitting past midnight at the death-beds of the poor.

After them came religious communities, men and women, often destined to find that their foundations here were to be made possible by Protestant generosity. One cannot say too often that if there is any phase of American life which reveals the fine nobility of our civic purpose, it is the long list of benefactions by those outside the church to convents and monasteries. These in turn brought something of old-world culture and of Christian charity. People unfamiliar with the subject often think of the "monastic life" as a single definite thing designed for a single, definite purpose. There are certain common characteristics; but the various foundations have each a very real individuality of tradition and tendency. Not a single one has ever been barred from the United States, and so the religious development of Catholics here gained a richness of quality and a diversity that match the complexity of our general national civilization. If this circumstance has sometimes created problems (as all contrasts do), one cannot doubt that the present stability and vitality of American Catholicism are largely due to irrigation by an unimpeded current of monasticism.

Gradually but steadily the immigrant population produced its own priesthood and hierarchy. The principle that a native clergy must be developed in every

new country as speedily as possible had not been enunciated by Rome in the early nineteenth century as firmly as it has since been, but undoubtedly the whole weight of Catholic tradition was in support of that principle. It is interesting to remember that even Benjamin Franklin thought Catholics here would be best served by placing them under the jurisdiction of a foreign hierarchy. Sometimes certain groups of Catholics have agreed with him. But the Holy See has resolutely decided against all these, and may now be justly proud of the compactly organized and on the whole admirably motivated clergy which has almost entirely grown out of Americanized immigrant races. How peculiar it is that those who still conceive of the Popes as foreign "potentates" never stop to consider the illogical action of these "alien rulers" in seeing to it that the Church here become entirely native in complexion, bound by nothing whatever excepting spiritual allegiance! In all truth, the patriot ought to be proud of Catholicism because it is a genuine American institution. It is the work of people who have helped to build cities and to develop farms—who have even done their part in making good government subsist amongst us.

In the year 1927 Catholics are conscious that a share of the religious socialization of the immigrant has been achieved, as far as they are concerned. Tens of thousands were, no doubt, lost during the era of settlement; but very likely most of these were people

to whom spiritual belief was merely a convention not worth much effort to retain. Few have been lost because of incompatibility between their citizenship and their religion—a very few, scandalized, perhaps, by unworthy leaders or disgusted by a certain cheapness of thought which has now and then characterized groups of Catholics lacking in charity or intelligence. But after all allowances have been made, Catholic experience during the era of immigration is a triumphant proof that the task of civil and religious socialization has been able to proceed without any duality whatever. The major portion of the conflicts which have arisen are, as we shall see, the result of circumstances quite non-religious in character.

III

The social status of the Catholic immigrant was often very low. It may be said without unkindness that the fine qualities of the Irish did not always compensate for that illiterate mentality which had been forced upon them during hundreds of years of political serfdom. You cannot beat and starve a people in the manner which Elizabeth's generals, Cromwell's soldiers and others thought eminently fitting where the Irish were concerned, without robbing them of their hunger for these dignities of culture which are largely the result of a consciousness of tradition. Similarly the German peasant, the toil-

roughened Pole and the woefully primitive Italian would probably not have been apt pupils at Mr. Bronson Alcott's transcendental school. In the matter of disciplined intelligence as well as in the lesser sphere of social graces the run of English settlers had what may be termed a flying start. It may be added that unlike the better class of Jews, the Catholic immigrants did not always hanker immediately for the things they were without.

In the second place, conscious as he necessarily had to be that the racial and cultural complexion of America was English, the immigrant tended, individually and collectively, to adhere to his own racial tradition. This, precisely because it was modern, was often bound up with intense nationalistic feeling. Although the Irish began very early to take an active part in United States politics, they were really unified only by that melancholy consciousness of "unhappy Erin" which some of their great leaders kept vigorously alive. The Germans clung to their language, their partly vernacular liturgy, and quite generally to their sense of racial solidarity. Other immigrant groups acted similarly. To some extent these actions were inevitable, and to an even greater extent they were profitable, for the reason that they introduced important and attractive variations into the English monotone. But unfortunately no tradition can flourish in an alien atmosphere. That "provincialism" which characterizes all the Shanghais and Honolulus

of the world settled upon immigrant conservatism here. Irish America, for instance, has had absolutely no part in the whole "Celtic renaissance," never getting farther intellectually than the outlook of Davis and Moore. And although the German Catholic press has been served by a number of first-rate men, it was never able to do more than cling to the skirts of intellectual and spiritual advancement in the mother country.

Moreover, there were reasons inherent in immigrant life in America for attributing a certain inferiority to Catholics. New England got its laborers and servants from among the Irish. When Emerson addressed some words of counsel to the "American young man," he recommended an interest in the uplifting of the negro, the Irishman and the Catholic. Hawthorne's descriptions of Irish life under incipient New England industrial conditions are so graphic that I cannot refrain from quoting an apt passage. An entry into the note-books for July 15th, 1837, records: "Went with B—— yesterday to visit several Irish shanties, endeavoring to find out who had stolen some rails of a fence. At the first door at which we knocked (a shanty with an earthen mound heaped up against the wall, two or three feet thick) the inmates were not up, though it was past eight o'clock. At last a middle-aged woman showed herself, half dressed, and completing her toilet. Threats were made of tearing down her house; for she is a lady of

very indifferent morals and sells rum. Few of these people are connected with the mill-dam,—or, at least, many are not so, but have intruded themselves into the vacant huts which were occupied by the mill-dam people last year. In two or three places hereabouts there is quite a village of these dwellings, with a clay and board chimney, or oftener an old barrel, smoked and charred with the fire. One of the little hamlets stands on both sides of a deep dell, wooded and bush-grown, with a vista, as it were, into the heart of a wood in one direction, and to the broad, sunny river on the other. At two doors we saw very pretty and modest-looking young women,—one with a child in her arms. Indeed, they all have innumerable little children; and they are invariably in good health, though always dirty of face."

A later immigrant population was submerged under the rising wave of industrialism. Italians, Poles, Hungarians, Austrians, who in their home land had been simple villagers, became factory hands, keepers of tiny, fly-infested shops, venders, and finally bootleggers. Such conditions are not those which a benevolent well-wisher of the human race would recommend. They cannot be fully guaranteed to produce a moronic population, but their general tendency is undoubtedly in that direction. Social workers have cited so many examples that it is really useless for me to labor the point. And yet on the whole the chief complaints entertained by native

Americans against the industrialized immigrant have not been based on statistics showing a wholesale moral collapse. Generally the argument has stressed about the same matters as Hawthorne's report did: —poverty, uninhabitable and slovenly houses, markedly alien habits, plenty of children and no maids, a certain clannishness. More particularly it has stressed the Tammany Halls which in almost every large city have capitalized the political ambitions and—though that is not now true of Tammany Hall itself —the political venality of the everlasting East or West Side. After all, in the business of civic corruption so much depends upon the name and appearance of one's club!

Regarding all of these matters, one fact needs to be emphasized. The handicaps which the foreigner brought with him have greatly impeded the work of the Church, although something may be said for them as sources of loyalty; *but those acquired by reason of social conditions in the United States have caused nine tenths of the ill-feeling against that Church.* Agitation against the Catholic has to a large extent been agitation against a class of people considered undesirable for other than religious reasons. The truth of this statement will become more apparent if we stop to consider what happens when a new district is opened to industrial production. Prior to the coming of the factory, the mine or the mill, there may have been a quiet town, populated by

persons in easy circumstances between whom there existed a bond created by education, racial and social similarity, and perhaps the Protestant faith. Very likely a trim little church sheltered a congregation reasonably attentive to the remarks of the rector, and conscious at all events of the eminent respectability of being a pew holder. Now a heterogeneous population, bearing all the ear-marks Hawthorne so carefully noted and guilty of varied strangenesses of language and custom, begins to creep into the more antiquated houses. These prove inadequate, and a series of tents, shanties and crudely constructed dwellings gradually filter through all but the most exclusive streets. With these things come factory smoke, gaudy cinemas, replicas of Coney Island, secret sources of illicit liquor—in short, all the usual adornments of the factory town.

What follows? Well, two things. First, the Chamber of Commerce begins to whoop up a boom. Normally that means pressure on the City Council —more taxes for boulevards and parks, catering to the "foreign element" that can vote or at least does, and abolition of cherished property restrictions. Secondly, the trim little church and its congregation are submerged under an attack of untidiness and indifference. Generally the church finally surrenders to a good price for its real-estate, but anyhow the congregation moves out to more exclusive quarters, taking with it an intense resentment of the new order

and what is presumed to have caused it. Seldom will a good American rise in wrath and condemn industry for the havoc wrought. Industry is business, and as such is reverenced by the Anglo-Saxon mind. But the working people—the foreigners, the Catholics! These obtrude themselves everywhere, make matters worse by erecting atrocious but invariably huge churches, and end by running the municipal government to suit themselves—or those who know how to organize them.

I honestly believe that most American suspicion of Catholics from the point of view of the constitutional ideal of government is due to what has happened in large cities like New York and Chicago. The ward and its cabal, the party boss, the graft-riddled police force, the nepotistic judiciary—all these are laid to politicians who are, as a matter of fact, often men with names having something like a Catholic ring. A serious study of the situation would, of course, reveal the complete innocence of the Church. It is precisely because the Catholic clergy has so scrupulously refrained from indulging in civic or political instruction —precisely because it has issued no edicts against concrete governmental immorality—that the ignorance and supineness of certain large groups of Catholic voters is so complete. Of course the more notorious worthies are Catholics only in name. But apart from all such details, the fact remains that almost all agitation against the Church in large cities

is not based on resentment of Catholic doctrine or religious belief but upon political and social conduct which has proved galling. The same thing is true, naturally enough, about the Jews and Protestant foreigners. But for some queer reason nobody seems to realize that there are innumerable Protestant foreigners, or to notice that a good share of city riff-raff come from families with an American pedigree as long as Jesse James's. It is possibly an oversight!

During recent years the honors for anti-Romanism have gone to the Ku Klux Klan. Having seen something of the methods and leadership of this highly commercial organization, I really do not think it has been or will be capable of doing any great injury to the Catholic cause, provided ecclesiastical buildings are adequately insured. But the phenomenon to which it bears witness—the phenomenon of the readiness of millions of hard-working, upright rural citizens to contribute money and wear uniforms in order that a number of individuals, usually disreputable and never distinguished, might glut their mean ambitions—is truly startling. One cannot get rid of the thing with an angry snort, because it is big and human enough to merit earnest attention. What has the Catholic done to merit this irate anathema? Here once again, I believe, we are confronted with a situation that has little or nothing to do with the Church, but which is an outgrowth of immigrant conditions.

The people who support the Klan are the people who abhor the city—abhor its sudden usurpation of economic and social power, the impression it gives of moral degradation, and the smell it leaves in the nostrils. Add to that a certain distaste deeply rooted in mankind though it is extremely difficult to explain—the distaste fomented by the mixing of races. This exists almost everywhere, but is perhaps most acute in the United States because of the problem created by the presence of the negro. Now all this is the work of the foreigner, thinks the rustic sage. The foreigner is the Catholic, and therefore! Rural anti-Romanism is based on instinct, not on intelligence, but somehow one admires it more for being so. There is an appalling rural problem in these United States, which is only very secondarily economic in character. The root is rather the fact that life has ebbed from the country, has followed the high tension wires of urban existence, and has returned in the shape of corrupt politics, naked chorus girls, poodle dogs, salacious books and the grosser offenses of the stock exchange. No wonder there is resentment. The country may not be any better, but it occupies the critic's seat.

Blaming all this on the Catholic Church (and, of course, on the Jews and the negroes) is really very funny. One may reasonably suppose that Broadway would be several thousand shades brighter and the moral complexion of the whole city as many shades

darker if Catholicism lost its restraining grip on millions of people. But we shall be frank and admit that a certain portion of rural resentment *is* the Church's fault. Catholic concentration in certain large cities is not altogether a matter of chance. It was deliberately promoted by a number of well-meaning but short-sighted leaders who supposed that only group solidarity could preserve the faith. They overestimated the difficulties of rural ministry, and they really believed that antipathy to Catholics was essentially religious rather than social in character. As a matter of fact, a contemporary statistician (the Reverend J. Elliott Ross) has shown that where Catholic life has been established outside large cities, it has borne fruit more vigorously—judging by outward signs—than it has under industrial conditions. If more immigrants of fifty years ago had gone to the land, if their families had increased to the extent customary in the country, the Church would not be identified today with the city as against agriculture, its numerical strength would perhaps be greater and more evenly distributed, and contact would have dispelled the myriad gross illusions that exist about the "religion of the Popes."

Looking over the whole scene, one sees that the coming of the immigrant was an extremely perilous though inevitable adventure. To the Catholic Church fell a large share of the work of ministering to the spiritual needs of the new population. This work

taxed its resources to the utmost. It faced conditions it was powerless to alter, met with numerous rebuffs, but succeeded in enkindling loyalty and enthusiasm upon the heels of which prosperity followed. To the nation at large, the immigrant was often a troublesome figure, although the blame for most of what is attributed to him really belongs to a system of industrial exploitation which was not modified until the establishment of organized labor and the spread of a new spirit among employers and financiers. The incessant clash between the old settler and the newcomer frequently led to convenient abuse of the Catholic Church, erroneously but nevertheless gloriously identified with the immigrant. The Church often suffered heavy losses of prestige and of that good will which instills optimism and so makes toil seem easier. In return that Church generously contributed to the national welfare, going out of its way to encourage loyalty to the United States among its members and performing deeds of mercy calculated to alleviate untold misery and to forestall wholesale immorality.

The Catholic record during the nation's wars is not and cannot be challenged. Every conflict has found the "Romanist" immigrant ready to take his part and even more. Similarly the Church has to resolutely opposed communistic movements that it may almost be said to have jeopardized its reputation as the sponsor of social action. The greatest civic

service it has rendered, however, is the moral influence it has exerted over families and individuals. Although the "Thou shalt nots" it has thundered have done much, its most genuine achievement has been the promotion of positive good. Dealing with fallible, imperfect men, convinced that man is imperfect and fallible, it has proposed, day in and day out, nothing less than the Eight Beatitudes. One does not know where the nation could look for better or more exalted rules of conduct.

IV

What of culture? One cannot conceive of either a nation or of the Kingdom of God without the twin elements of beauty and reason. These are the distinguishing characteristics of man, and we believe Christ had them in mind when He spoke of the coming of the Sacred Spirit. To them every specifically Catholic civilization has been faithful, so that even those to whom the assumptions of the Christian faith are chimerical reverence the harmony, the aspiration, of those best expressions of the European spirit which have been fittingly termed "memorials of the blessed." There is a strict, Diana-like beauty which belongs to logic and mathematical investigation; there is a softer loveliness, having more both of the senses and of mystical contemplativeness. Sons of the Church have joined the two in philosophic

poems, in grave, full-blown minsters, and most particularly in the liturgy. Round about this central religious art of all Catholic ages, speculation and logic have flourished, lesser poets have sung of human adventure, and artisans have managed to be both busy and creative.

One would, of course, look in vain for achievement of this sort in the United States. Catholics have not even done what might reasonably have been expected of them to foster letters, speculation and the arts. There are some painters among them, but there has been only one John La Farge, who got few ecclesiastical commissions despite the magnificent possibilities of his stained glass. There have been Catholic poets, but all would have starved much sooner if they had depended upon the cheques and discrimination of their confreres. There has been a Catholic press, but barring notable efforts here and there in the periodical field, one characterizes this succinctly by saying that it knew only two moments of genuine vitality—one an Irish moment, when the passionate outcry of the Celtic cause rang true; the other a German moment, in which there was struck something like a note of sincere enthusiasm for a rich old culture. One may say in extenuation that the pressure of America's industrial revolution lay heavily upon Catholics. They were poor and weary, they had little time.

And yet this is not altogether an honest excuse. I

cannot help thinking that the Catholic Church stripped bare, which one confronts in this country, is the outcome of martial conditions imposed by environment. It is the result of sacrificing much to gain more. During the hundred and fifty years of American Independence, the Catholic task has been to keep the faith alive—to build up a steadfast society of practicing members, and to defend itself against constant abuse. Necessarily the character of all primarily religious thinking became apologetic. We listened to a never-ending series of arguments about every detail of a complex creed, and our children were prepared for life by committing to memory a summary of dogmas called the catechism and by being exhorted to conform. The tenor of popular Catholic pedagogy became almost entirely logical and intellectual. Indeed, the priests were thought of as essentially "authorities," whose business it was to "know," and the layman was an adjunct individual obliged to "believe." This was certainly not an ideal state of affairs: based upon an incorrect theory of pedagogy, it created conditions not normal to full-grown spiritual life.

The leisurely, wise Old World Church had created a better system of popular education—the liturgy. In this marvelous, symmetrical blending of dogma and mystical insight, of sacrifice and prayer, charity and intelligence, there is fully expressed a faith which when reduced to intellectual outlines

however correct always seems a little bleak and acrid. And about all this, like the glow which rests upon a perfect landscape, there lies a sacred glory, a loveliness, which transcends every other literary work of man. If those who have been deeply offended by some acrimonious phrase of Catholic apologetic, possibly with a result that they have kept angrily aloof from Catholic things ever since, would only read the texts of the *Missa Solemnis* or the *Missa pro Defunctis* over which Bach and Bruckner pondered! They could hardly fail to realize, then, that the love of God verily fills to the brim the faith that had lived on from the tomb of the Apostles. I have read the Mass for Good Friday many and many a time, but never without being profoundly moved by the vision of an earth there re-created by charity and goodness—an earth upon which Christ's death would have blossomed into that abundant life He so greatly desired. All this, of course, must be *believed*, not toyed with in a mere aesthetic mood. It is only as truth that it is really beautiful, but so it is beautiful beyond comparison.

Someday we shall restore liturgy to its place as the rhythm and the meaning of Catholic life; and having done that, we shall see rise round the chancel once again the myriad carven forms of man's aspiration, and shall hear the wonderful ecstasy of Heaven even in our profane songs. Liturgy is community religion; art is community intuition. Neither

can flourish in cramped quarters, and Catholics even today live in something like an armed camp. It must be admitted, however, that any departure from a semi-military discipline is dangerous for all forms of society. Here Imperial Rome is as pertinent an example as the Church under the Renaissance Popes. If the strictures which have hemmed in American Catholics (and of these there are many besides the one I have named) involve a loss of creative freedom, they have nevertheless aided in making the basic task of religious socialization a success. One can safely say as much—for the past. Today it is already apparent, however, that something more must be attempted. A state of siege, accepted too long as a normal condition, destroys morale; and besides it is apparent that Catholicism in general is everywhere experiencing an awakening of its creative and intellectual force. One cannot doubt that unless it supports the numerous cultural essays which characterize it at present in America, its grip on men will relax and its service to the nation remain a mere fraction of what might have been.

In this connection it is profitable to note a peculiar historical phenomenon. The various United States frontiers all produced their books and bibelots, their magazines and literary cenacles. Cincinnati had the honor of being publisher to John Keats. There were budding novelists galore in all the pioneer states. But although Catholics were often numerically

strong in the West and Middle-West, they contributed nothing of their own to the current literary and artistic production. Moreover, they remained practically without influence upon those who were doing things. Although James Hall, the greatest of early Middle-Western editors, defended Catholics against their critics, he went bankrupt as a result. The prevailing atmosphere was contentious and hostile. Father Stephen Theodore Badin, whose *Real Principles of Roman Catholics* was followed by an endless series of similar defenses, was during the major portion of his life an Indian missionary. It is significant that his one literary venture had to be an apologetic battle with chimeras and absurdities. So rare was literary talent among Catholics that when the weekly *Ave Maria* was begun at Notre Dame, Indiana, about 1875, its issues were made up almost entirely of translations from the French.

The contrast between this state of affairs and Puritan New England is highly remarkable. There, as we have seen, there existed a really notable interest in Catholic affairs and more than occasionally in the Catholic religion. This was not in any manner attributable to numerical and social influence—indeed, the "servant class" standard was anything excepting an inducement. What then was the cause? The only answer I can find is that the renaissance in New England was the adventure of educated men, who approached history and thought with some de-

gree of scientific curiosity, who knew how to travel, and who were not altogether hidebound by prepossessions. This answer is substantiated by subsequent history. The Catholic tradition has never been refused a hearing in America wherever men existed who were really scholarly and interested in spiritual exploration. A "hearing" is, of course, hardly the proper word. There were lamentably few Catholics to contribute to the conversation; and for the most part, cultural concern with the Church in this country has been the result of patient personal investigation.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

I

SOME time after the retreat of the Germans and the exile of their Kaiser, it so happened that a fellow-soldier and I were looking at Paris from the approach to the church of Sacré-Cœur, on Montmartre hill. We had mingled with crowds of poorly dressed women and children at their devotions; and I could not help commenting aloud upon the pathetic fact that the Church, which had been the one defense of the poor throughout the making of Europe, which was now offering widows and orphans a solace they could not find elsewhere, should have been attacked upon this very spot less than fifty years before in the name of labor. My friend was an unusually intelligent American citizen. In fact he had already gained some reputation as a college professor, and to a considerable extent his hobby was the philosophy of government. But suddenly the whole force of his once Protestant, now agnostic, soul was injected into the remark: "If the Catholic Church ever gets the up-

per hand, numerically, in the United States, I wonder if people like me will not have to stand and fight against her!"

In this reflection, more spontaneous than reasoned, there was implied a problem which I believe is wholly speculative, but which has turned up like a bend in the road ever since Catholics and their neighbors began to live side by side in this country. Does not (we are asked) the Catholic theory of religion and even of the state insist that the Church is the supreme arbiter of society in so far as spiritual things are concerned, and that when (as should always be the case) its power is associated with the State, it may use coercion to carry out its purposes? And if this view is really held by the Pope, who can make acceptance of it binding upon all the members of the Church, how can Americans who are Protestants or agnostics look forward untroubled to the day when it will become a legalized reality in the republic? Indeed, why not take up arms against it at once, in order to insure personal and national safety? Several times during the past this last question has led to social, political and even armed organization against Catholics. Blood has been spilled because of it. Catholics have been outlawed by reason of it from aspirations to high political office.

At the present time the matter has a political significance once more. The candidacy of Governor Alfred E. Smith has been challenged, in public and in

private, because of what his profession of faith has been believed to imply. I may be pardoned for saying here that while I am interested, like every other private citizen, in Mr. Smith's record as an executive and in his fitness for high office, I am thoroughly convinced that no real point of principle ought to be sacrificed or ignored in his behalf. Indeed the worst thing that could happen to Catholics in this country is that they should be impelled by somebody like Mr. Charles Marshall—or, in fact, by any kind of attack, —into willingness to repudiate an essential part of their tradition. Realization of this fact induced Mr. Smith himself to entrust that portion of his argument which concerned the specific teachings of the Church to a trained theologian. Of course much was left unsaid in the limited space allotted; and so I shall undertake here a fuller exposition of the matter, ill-fitted though I be for so important a task. The reader will kindly bear in mind that I claim to be nothing more than a fairly intelligent layman interested in the problem from a scientific rather than a theological point of view, that what I have to say will be gladly retracted if proved wrong, and that I have sought the advice of competent persons.

We may begin with a brief consideration of what the American code of government actually specifies concerning ethics and religion. The Constitution tells us first of all that the people of the United States have decided to establish a sovereign power in order

to secure the good things which properly organized society ensures. This power is carefully defined, each function it exercises being strictly limited and made to fit in with other functions. So long as it does what the people have authorized it to, therefore, the governing might is immune to interference. Having said this much, the Constitution goes on to declare who the "people" are. It specifies what they must be in order to claim the rank of citizens, and it enumerates privileges which are theirs once they have been properly accredited. The makers of the Constitution, however, were not satisfied with stopping here. A number of them were deeply interested in certain "rights" which they believed were inherent in human nature. Some of these were named and guaranteed. Perhaps the right to hold property was given most attention, as is eminently natural in view of the fact that government is necessarily more concerned with property than with anything else.

Other rights, however, were set forth and approved. "Life" as a right was dealt with under several headings, immunities of various sorts were recognized, justice before the law was made obligatory, and certain inalienable liberties were named. Thus there is no doubt that the men we remember as "fathers" of the nation bore in mind the principles which Thomas Jefferson had eloquently proclaimed in the text of the Declaration of Independence. The problem of establishing a government that would

endure and prove acceptable to the various states was, however, so distinctly their major concern that not all the ideals of the revolutionary mind could immediately be incorporated into the new code of law. Just as soon as opportunity presented itself, the most glaring omissions were rectified, but rectified —as should be noticed—in the Constitutional spirit. Therefore the Amendment which dealt with religious faith did not speak of freedom of conscience or worship as a right which could be justly claimed by every citizen, but simply stated that the legislative function of the government was prohibited from taking steps calculated to deny that freedom to anybody.

It is important to note that no positive affirmation regarding religion was incorporated into the basic statement of American principle. Whether freedom of belief is a right; whether or not the government should encourage public worship of God; whether, even, some particular creed should be aided with public funds:—these were questions which the Constitution left unanswered. As time went on, however, the public mind came to accept the principles of the Declaration of Independence as a genuine American inheritance. The "right" to freedom of religious worship was enunciated, liberty and equality were declared essential to the national theory, and American Catholics in particular often invoked all these things against intolerance. The executive arm of the

government built up a tradition of toleration of all faiths, and (notably in its relations with Mexico after 1912) tried to recommend that tradition to other governments. The Supreme Court, it is true, acted somewhat more cautiously. Although there is some judicial precedent for speaking of "freedom of conscience" as a right guaranteed by law, the Court, in handing down a decision in the famous Oregon School Law case, spoke of a "tradition of liberty" recognized as fundamental in all states of the Union.

What are the origins of this American profession of tolerance? The era in which the Constitution was adopted certainly set no example. In Great Britain the Church was established as firmly as it had ever been under the Tudors. Catholic and Protestant countries on the European continent were all faithful to the idea of a state church. The French Revolution, when it broke out, chopped off the heads of dissenters with the greatest nonchalance. And it is profitable to remember that some form of Protestant religion is today official in more countries than recognize the Catholic Church as official. In some places —even in truly democratic England—statutes still uphold specific discriminations against Catholics. Indeed one may generalize and declare that Protestantism as such is responsible for not a single effort to establish the principle of toleration.

Of course something had been said regarding the matter during the eighteenth century. John Locke's

philosophy advocated both democracy and liberalism of views, but the reason was primarily a tendency to consider it unwise to have any views. The whole era was one in which dominant intelligence stood committed to the principle that revealed religion was really not credible—that beyond a vague philosophic belief in God, it was better not to declare oneself on the subject of supernatural affairs. Small wonder that such a point of view could well afford to be liberal! Doubtless some of this doctrine appealed very strongly to revolutionary American thinkers. References to it may be detected in many places, and there is reason to believe that Jefferson in particular eyed it benignantly. Nevertheless the Anglo-Saxon mind is always more deeply influenced by experience than by abstract thinking. It takes convenient texts wherever it finds them (and eighteenth century English and American writers on government traveled far in their reading of political literature), but actual events are the burden of its story.

The history of the Tudors, the Puritan Revolution, the claim of absolute royal authority put forward by the Stuarts, the program of protest which enabled the Whig party to grow strong—all these things, which represented centuries of incessant and often destructive intolerance, induced many to believe that stable government was impossible so long as what happened to be a majority insisted upon ramming its beliefs down the throats of others.

Meanwhile the American colonists had made a number of suggestive experiments. They had tried out New England theocracy, had lived under the Established Church (which tended to remain Tory in sympathy throughout the Revolution), and had seen two notable attempts to grant religious freedom—one in Maryland, the other in Rhode Island. Even from a bare practical point of view, the founders of the new federal government could hardly help seeing that in case a state religion were actually desirable, the process of selecting one would cause no end of disturbance.

Put all these motives together and you have a sufficiently strong explanation of why the new-born United States made up their minds regarding religion in the way they did. It is well to remember also that the civic ideal of that time was the Roman republic. The new democratic idea of government owed to the vision of early Roman freedom and health a good ninety percent of its attractiveness. French historians are fond of calling attention to the fact that the most fiery revolutionary pamphleteers, Camille Desmoulins for instance, were crammed full of Latin maxims. Addison's Whig Cato is a good instance of a similar kind of thing in England. The dream of getting the common people together to form their own government and run it to suit themselves was undoubtedly aided by a great many extraneous factors such as the nature-poetry of Rous-

seau and the wit of Voltaire, but essentially it was a strong and stirring popular vision which would sooner or later have got what it was after without the help of those factors. And naturally enough once you set out to rid yourselves of unnecessary authorities, clerical rulers are also likely to be discarded. Rome had believed in the deities of its fathers; the new republic had faith in God and Christ. Were not these things enough?

Indeed the idea that we are a Christian nation has survived into a time when the title is no longer deserved. When contemporary school-boards and other associations become alarmed over the laxities of youth or the proportions of a crime-wave, they proceed to advocate "religion" in the home and the school as an antidote. Very, very rarely do they have any specific creed in mind. It is assumed everybody will realize that some form of Christian belief is meant. Why be more specific? The holiness boom started by Mr. Bruce Barton has likewise satisfied a hundred thousand people perfectly. It is immaterial to them that religious tradition is here neatly tailored to fit the average business man's mentality, that it comes like a three-piece suit all ready to wear. Under such circumstances it is rather useless, but still not unwise, to remember that when Francis of Assisi "tried on" the perfect doctrine of Christ he found the marks of five nails upon his hands and feet, and over his weary heart.

II

Similar in this respect to the American Constitution, the Catholic Church does not in principle recognize the "right" to freedom of worship. Fully three-fourths of what may be termed its political difficulties arise from this fact. But just as popular recognition of this freedom has gradually developed into a state of mind more or less acceptable to all modern democratic governments, so also the Church has steadily tended to agree that civil toleration in matters of conscience is necessary and desirable. These few words sum up a great deal of history and philosophic debate. They have, however, comparatively little to do with theology. The doctrinal and mystical elements of Catholic Christianity would probably have attained their full development if conditions existing in the age of the Catacombs had never changed; the political aspects of the Church are, however, things acquired during the performance of a given historic task. It is well to bear this distinction in mind—to realize that the problem under discussion is bound up with human circumstances of a certain sort, and to try to understand these circumstances.

The Christian Church was born into the Roman Empire. At first it was opposed by that Empire on the ground that it claimed to be a society having a law and government of its own, which in some meas-

ure conflicted with existing traditional regulations. The chief defense offered by the Church was heroic tenacity. Knowing that the authority they accepted as Christians was loftier and more beautiful than the power of Cæsar, the faithful died in numberless arenas for the sport of an ultra-patriotic mob. This mob, however,—as is usual in such cases,—was a great deal more apt at shouting than at reforming or saving the government. As a result a multitude of variegated barbarians succeeded in overwhelming the Empire, smashing into a heap of jagged fragments the most wonderful civil unit ever devised by man. With the unit went law, order, commerce, the arts—everything that goes to constitute civilization. It was an unparalleled European catastrophe and brought even Christians to the brink of despair.

Gradually, however, the Church discovered that its own society really occupied the empty place of the old imperial government. By dint of combating heresies within its own ranks and battling against all sorts of outside interference, it had acquired a habit of solidarity which had much of the effect of the *civis Romanus sum*. Before it there lay a tremendous opportunity: to restore in the world that orderly unity which invasion had destroyed. Out of barbarian materials it could rebuild the human universe, could make of it verily the kingdom of God on earth. But like all sensible men who plan reconstruction, the Christian leaders saw that the old founda-

tions were still serviceable. They had employed Greek philosophy as the best basis they could find for their apologetic. They would take the Roman law, or as much of it as might be saved, as the ground-work of a new social order.

All of this could not, of course, be calmly reasoned out in detail and then applied. The barbarian was a ferocious savage with a devastating attachment to fire and sword. Much that had seemed imperishable went up in smoke like so much straw, and the crude new material was anything but pliable. These monsters from all the unconquered forests and plains of earth could neither read nor think, build nor save. By a series of truly Providential circumstances, however, a number of their leaders were baptized into the Church. As a result their followers also immediately became Christians. All that was needed was a laconic statement from the commander in chief. Despite countless murders and relapses, Europe accepted the faith with a rapidity genuinely astonishing.

Throughout that Europe, however, there was really only one organized government and law—the government and law of the Church. This was stable, could manage remarkably well to put down revolutions (heresies and schisms) within itself, and was not tied to any particular locality or tribe. In the beginning its thought had been directed to a "kingdom not of this world." Now, however, it saw

very clearly that unless it did what it could for terrestial conditions, there would be precious little of humanity left to prepare for a life to come. This impulse to civilize and govern was healthy and profoundly Christian. Surely the legitimacy of a religious synthesis of earthly life had been plainly voiced in the Saviour's parable of the mustard seed, of which Newman says: "The parable . . . not only represents the kingdom of Christ as the greatest of kingdoms, but, like Nebuchadnezzar's, as a kingdom under which things external to it find shelter, or as an empire."

Obviously all this implied making up one's mind as to what government really is and learning how to carry on the business of administration properly. This was no easy task, particularly because the tradition of Roman law, Christian teaching and tribal custom had become so inextricably entangled. It is a long way from Alexander of Hales' statement that "Natural law ordains the equal freedom of all in the state of original nature; but according to the state of fallen nature it ordains that subjection and lordship are necessary for the constraint of evil," to Aquinas' perfect definition of law: "An ordinance of reason, for the common good, promulgated by him who has care of the community." Yet these two men were separated from each other by only a few years, both having profited by that industrious interest which the twelfth century had taken in the study of

jurisprudence, in the codification of Roman law, and in the development of the ecclesiastical courts.

Their statements are similar, however, in that law is conceived of not as a series of mandates imposed by arbitrary force or as a set of rules designed to counterbalance egoistic instincts, but as a group of principles embedded in nature itself and more or less evident to all men. In Aquinas' time (the thirteenth century) these principles had all been carefully defined, analyzed and systematized, so that "reason" could be spoken of as determining the legitimacy of all law, just as "reason" demonstrated the truth of natural religion and led to the threshold of Revelation. Earlier Christians, however, had relied to a great extent upon authority, of which the Bible, the Fathers and tradition of the Church, and what was known of antique experience constituted the chief elements. Throughout all their thinking about the matter, two great mystical convictions may be said to have been prominent: first, the free-will of man, which enabled him to make a good or evil disposition of his "self," and secondly the will of God, all knowing and all good, conformity with which is the true end of all men.

While the primary relation between humanity and divinity was intimately religious, other secondary relations were considered equally apparent. Man, living in a state of earthly nature, was entitled by his free-will to certain inalienable liberties or "rights"

of which no one could justly deprive him. On the other hand, he could obviously not claim full freedom, both because his nature was corrupt through original sin and because it was absolutely necessary —that is, natural—for him to live in society. Therefore the Divine will had established, in nature and legitimate social authority, certain limitations, measures or laws which individual men were bound to obey. The natural law was universal and absolute; the social law was specific and localized: but both compelled obedience only by reason of God's will, which obviously could not require anything unreasonable, unnatural or designed to injure the common welfare.

This was certainly about as sensible and equitable a theory of jurisprudence as has ever been proposed. It was, in fact, so good that it assimilated and ennobled all worth-while aspects of classical law and later on bequeathed its conclusions even to those who did not accept its premises. Unfortunately, however, the era which followed the barbarian invasions was by no means always ready to put it into practice. The grossness and greediness of rulers and subjects, the survival of tribe instincts and dictatorships, the lack of education and courtesy—these and other handicaps prevented the millennium from arriving. Therefore the Christian Church early began to develop what later became an elaborate system of ecclesiastical courts, using what is still termed "canon

law." The origin of this system may be seen in the "council" before which, as the Scriptures relate, Saints Peter and Paul arrived at some important decisions regarding ecclesiastical practice. As time went on, the "Roman inheritance" of the Church in the matter of justice was recognized widely enough to permit all questions involving clerics to be tried before ecclesiastical tribunals. Nothing did more to guarantee the universality of the Church, or to advertise the genuine equitableness of its legal system. Soon it grew customary to refer all kinds of lay questions to the ecclesiastical tribunals; and it is admitted by almost every historian that the practice usually meant a "square deal."

As soon as this had happened, the Church might well consider itself a universally established society. All Europe was enrolled in it; the prevailing conception of law was the one it had formulated; and the decisions rendered by it on the basis of that law were recognized as binding. In religion, however, as Dean Inge has gloomily remarked, "nothing fails like success." Christianity had reckoned with the fall of man; it quite forgot the Tower of Babel. So firmly were its eyes fixed upon the unity and universality of the Roman Empire, that it apparently failed to see that Europe was ready to fall apart into old tribal groups restored to life by the emergence here and there of powerful individuals capable of effecting individuality of social coalitions. There

were a hundred indications of the coming storm, none of which is more significant or well-remembered than the struggle between St. Thomas of Canterbury and King Henry II over the right of the Church to remain independent of the royal English power.

Christendom was too deeply rooted in the world not to suffer from the tremendous earthquake that followed. There is also no doubt that it was infected with worldliness, which a series of intense spiritual revivals—the reforms of Hildebrand, the Franciscan and Dominican movements—could not eliminate. The practice of allowing secular princes to choose men for high ecclesiastical sees; the frequent gross misuse of stipends and revenues; moral weaknesses of a grave kind, and a growing indifference to the poor:—these were sores and diseases which great ecclesiastics saw, which they gave their lives to eliminate, but which nevertheless lived on. Yet though the Church had weakened a little during its long and arduous campaign, it was still immeasurably superior to its age, still the light of the world. That is why the purest and best men of the time—Saint Bernard, for instance—were most anxious to preserve doctrinal purity. They felt that so long as the teaching of the Church remained intact, there was no danger of really organic decay,—just as a modern physician hopes for recovery while the essential bodily structure of his patient has not been impaired.

Heresy, however, was rampant. Groups of vision-

aries and fanatics, of simple people scandalized by ecclesiastical example and of princes envious of the power of religion, were to be met with everywhere. What was to be done? In principle the matter was none too clear. The Christian Church had always maintained that its authority to teach came from God, not indirectly through nature or reason, but directly through Revelation. Acceptance of it was, therefore, to be exacted of all men provided they had once entered the Christian communion. From this all were expelled who professed to speak with authority of their own, or who refused to accept essential teachings. On the other hand, however, there remained the fundamental principle of free-will, which conceded that God had given to every individual the power to determine his own spiritual destiny, and the scarcely less essential mandate of charity which exacted patience with the errors and blindness of others. It was sinful to doubt an important article of faith; but all sin must be voluntary and intellectual on the part of sinners, of whom moreover Christ had spoken so pertinently in the parable of the Good Shepherd.

Therefore Saint Bernard, one of the most earnest of reformers in the twelfth and indeed in any century, firmly enunciated the rule: "The heretics must be conquered with arguments, not with arms." This was also the conviction of most Popes, notably Alexander III; and it is probable that, following the ex-

ample of the Poor Man of Assisi, it would have dominated Catholic practice, had it not been for two things. First, the populace deeply resented heresy and often lynched those suspected of it, while princes grew alarmed lest the stability of the social order be shaken by religious innovation; secondly, the revival of Roman jurisprudence during the twelfth century gave undue emphasis to certain old texts and precedents. It was learned that Justinian had pronounced Manicheanism deserving of death; and though the official "decretal" drawn up by Gratian for the Holy See repeated the doctrine of Saint Augustine that heresy might be punished with fines and imprisonment, literal and narrow-minded legalists were gayly prescribing the penalty of capital punishment.

All of these tendencies were brought to a head by certain redoubtable heresies which broke out in Southern France during the early thirteenth century, and in which religious aberration, cupidity and social perversion were strangely mingled. In the name of Pope Innocent III, a crusade was preached against these irregularities; and though the Sovereign Pontiff was so grieved and shocked at the excesses committed in the name of Christendom that he hastened to end the crusade, the war kept on as a murderous combat between the north and south of France. Indeed all over Europe the secular princes used heresy, real or imaginary, as a pretext for making war and expropriating property. The Emperor Frederick II

seems to have been a particularly grand success in this respect.

It was primarily for the purpose of putting an end to secular prowess against the erring that the institution of the Inquisition was set up and entrusted, for the most part, to the Dominican Order. The examiners had full power to probe the orthodoxy of suspected individuals, and to pronounce a sentence considered appropriate. From a legal point of view the process was simply an adaptation of the long-established canonical courts to a particular problem; from a human point of view, it was a decided improvement over the secular methods, bad and in some ways scandalous though it was. The justification of the Inquisition is that it did something carefully and on the whole correctly which the state would have done anyhow and very unfairly. Far be it from me, however, to defend what was done. The Inquisition was a concession to group fanaticism and legal literalism. It was often administered with a ferocity which can only be accounted for by saying that Spanish singleness of purpose sometimes develops into real cruelty; and the sum-total of its efforts was a catastrophic failure, which during six hundred years has estranged millions from the faith of Christ. More important, however, is the fact that it compromised more than a thousand years of genuine religious life—that it acted on the assumption that rigor is greater than charity, and that the free-

will of man can really be curbed by force. For myself, I can think of no prayer more beneficial to the missionary work of the Catholic Church than this: May the Inquisition be deplored in ringing terms by all men, whosoever they may be, so that the memory of it will be buried forevermore!

Never in all its history was the Church more resplendent with great and good men than in the two centuries which followed the reign of Innocent III. The drift toward individualism, away from the ideal of unity proposed by Christendom as the heir of Rome, was, however, apparent everywhere. Speculation—science, ethics, metaphysics—was now divided into separate compartments, with the result that one scholar no longer understood the other. Vernacular languages began to replace the old Latin; new literatures voiced the minds of new and disparate peoples. Inventions of various sorts, growing commercial enterprise and above all the terrors of the Black Death (from the ravages of which mediaeval Europe never recovered), announced the opening of a modern era during which humanity would give at least as much attention to the body as to the soul. Two matters were of particular importance: the Italian Renaissance and the Council of Constance.

Regarding the first one point only need be observed. The humanistic courts of Florence and Rome introduced an altogether different vision of antiquity than the Middle Ages had known. A sense of Rome

as a physical reality embodying power came into vogue, and the eternal hills were studded with shrines and memorials in radiant marble. This reality and power were then coveted with a strange, relentless greed, so that in the life of Cellini and the political theory of Machiavelli victory at any cost, by whatever means, was the goal envisaged. Corresponding with this new ambition, art spoke in terms of lavishly humanized heroism. Gone was the day of the old minster wherein every block of stone had expressed some part of a great synthesis of doctrine and aspiration, of community knowledge and desire. Gone also was the age when Rome had meant the reign of order in a great imperial commonwealth, as well as common enterprise in the upbuilding of civilization. The lofty Christian social structure, noblest of all the dreams ever conceived by humanity, was tottering—not because the architects had planned poorly, but because the materials were after all merely men.

The Council of Constance, which began its sessions on November 1, 1414, was perhaps a still more terrible warning that dissolution was at hand. Summoned to put an end to the scandalous schism then existing in western Europe, it succeeded in electing a new Pope and in condemning the heresies of Wyclif and Huss. Meanwhile, however, it had made three extremely dangerous innovations: it decreed that all the faithful, including the Pope, were

liable to punishment if they did not obey the mandates of the councils, which were to be held every ten years; it admitted theologians on equal terms with the Cardinals, it listened to demands that the lower clergy also be allowed to take a share in the proceedings; and it devised a system of Papal elections according to which delegates from the several nations met and selected a candidate. These things meant that the authority of the Holy See, which alone had saved the Church from subservience to the civil power and from a veritable abyss of simony, was on the verge of being turned over to a kind of ecclesiastical parliament. They also meant that the feeling of diverse nationalities had taken the place of that sentiment of spiritual solidarity which for so many years had characterized Christian Europe. Such was the state of affairs inside the Church.

Outside, the condemnation of Wyclif and Huss was received, not as a matter affecting a certain group of real or supposed heretics, but as a matter of national import. The death of John Huss created Bohemia, and to a very great extent it paved the way for those semi-nationalistic, semi-religious movements which finally culminated in the Religious Revolution.

It was the fate of Protestantism to begin everywhere as part of a movement to effect separatistic states having no longer the old common law and customs of Europe, but a law and custom sufficient

unto themselves. A series of wars followed, in which religious fanaticism fed the fury of new-born nationalism. From one end of Christian Europe to the other, things which had once been dearer than life were smashed and burned amid howls of feverish joy; and with them departed a spirit that was ample and merciful, world-comprehending and unifying. Barriers had arisen between people and people, town and town. A new variety of prince—the "absolute monarch" who ruled by Divine right—made his appearance. Underneath all this revolutionary movement lay much that was good and inevitable. Europe had grown too vast to sit around one political table. New sciences and speculative adventures had spilled over the synthesis of the mediaeval schools. Christianity itself had done so much to enrich and enlarge personality that the markedly individual person was bound to appear. The Religious Revolution, however, made normal development of all these impossible. It was spiritual dynamite which blasted everything to bits, so that priceless foundations were wrecked and the saving cement of religion was lost. Even Martin Luther was not pleased with the result; and in England the King who despoiled the Church prepared the way for the King whom his people put to death.

Memorably enough, the Church had not lost its vitality. Almost instantly it set out to work as hard for the conquest of the new world that had arisen

over night as it had labored in the evil days when the wilderness swallowed Rome. The Jesuits, organized by Saint Ignatius Loyola, constituted the vanguard and operated with a positively astounding success. In our time scholarship had so completely exonerated them from absurd charges that used to figure in hostile propaganda that no vindication of them is any longer necessary. There may have been something of the bureaucrat about them occasionally; but barring a surprisingly small handful of exceptions, they have been upright, intelligent and charitable bureaucrats. The Jesuits were brave enough to think universally, in spite of the times. They inaugurated and carried through a modern Catholic renaissance, which extended (as we shall see) to the arts and letters, and which also necessarily concerned itself with government.

A succession of brilliant thinkers analyzed the problems of modern society and offered a solution. In doing so they tried to conserve whatever was essentially Catholic in the tradition of the past as well as to embrace whatever was good in the new secular tendencies. They would have been the last people in the world to believe they were committing the Church to any political program or form of government. Accepting their world as they found it, they simply tried to determine what Christians ought to do under the circumstances. The conclusions arrived at by Cardinal Bellarmine are, perhaps, the most sig-

nificant and well-known statements of Jesuit theory. They were highly respected and cordially detested by James I of England, so that many seventeenth-century British political theorists had some knowledge of them. Bellarmine declared that "Because of the fallen state of human nature, a rule tempered by all three forms (the monarchic, the aristocratic and the democratic), is more useful than a simple monarchy." He further stated that if "it were provided that neither the supreme ruler nor those who ruled under him should attain to such positions of dignity by hereditary succession, but that those best fitted should be selected from the body of the people and elevated to them, the commonwealth would then possess some of the attributes of a democracy."

The esteem in which Bellarmine's views were held and the remarkable way in which they appear to foreshadow the American form of government have led some scholars to put forth the opinion that at least a few of the makers of our Constitution were personally familiar with his writings. The progress of the debate does not seem, however, to permit sharing that opinion. Perhaps it would be best to say that the United States government as it came into being corresponds admirably with what the great sixteenth-century Jesuit theologian outlined as sound Catholic doctrine. This first theoretical contact between an old religion and a new nation has been reinforced to the ultimate jot and tittle by the Catholic record in

the United States. "Toleration" and "law" were associated for the first time in this country by the Catholic colonists in Maryland; and the code they fixed was broken only when the power to enforce it was wrested from their hands. They shared in the adoption of the Declaration and the signing of the Constitution. Every critical hour in the subsequent history of the republic found them ready to make heroic sacrifices, untroubled by any spectre of divided allegiance. Fredericksburg is part of their story, and they shared in the tangled tragedies of the Argonne. Immigration swelled their numbers with millions of people drawn from the most diverse social and racial groups, but nowhere did a representative of the Church assail American institutions (in the manner of Communists, for instance) and nowhere was there heard a syllable of any Catholic disloyalty to the Constitution. Indeed, though Catholics became numerically a power in the nation, they have never once attempted to use governmental power for their own ends, and they have zealously refrained from all attempts to write one of their special moral principles into federal or state law. They are simply citizens; and until that unimaginable, hypothetical day when God and country will no longer be associated in the United States, they will ask to be judged only by the loyalty and integrity of their citizenship.

During the era of readjustment, however, the

Church did not surrender its claim to *spiritual* authority. Indeed that claim was emphasized again and again, until the dogma of Papal Infallibility was declared in 1870. The essence of this claim is stated clearly in the words of Newman: "Either the Catholic religion is verily the coming of the unseen world into this, or there is nothing positive, nothing dogmatic, nothing real in any of our notions as to whence we come and whither we go." Indeed, the Catholic Church must uphold its right to teach and to exact obedience in the name of God, or the right will perish on the earth. I am profoundly convinced that all the Protestant creeds now in existence would tremble in their boots if Rome even so much as went on a vacation. But would the Catholic Church prove intolerant if it gained the upper hand?

To this question there are three answers. Christian tradition enforces the lesson that the right to teach and exact moral obedience does not imply the right to physical coercion. Secondly, Catholic theologians agree that wherever religious freedom is guaranteed by the civil constitution, there is an obligation in conscience to respect the provision. Thirdly, we have all learned from bitter experience that the greatest of virtues is charity, and that the noblest of creatures is the human person. The contemporary Catholic attitude towards the question has, however, been set forth so ably by George Count von Hertling, that I can do no better than quote his words here, particu-

larly since they have not, to my knowledge, been previously translated into English. It should be noted that Count von Hertling was not merely an exemplary Catholic, philosopher and theologian, but that he held many important offices and served, just prior to his death, as Imperial German Chancellor:

"The right to physical existence and what is implied by that right concerns the bodily aspect of man. But he is also and even primarily a spiritual and moral being. The distinguishing characteristic of his nature is, as a consequence, freedom. He alone among all the beings known to us in this world knows of the purpose which has been ordained for him, and accomplishes that purpose by personally subjecting himself to the moral law. But he is the master of his actions and can, therefore, turn his back upon his own proper goal—can violate the moral law. The civil law limits the individual's use of freedom, not for the reason that those who live in the same community must necessarily establish a balance between power and egoistic tendencies, but because if there were no limit to the use of freedom by all, the preservation of the moral law and the realization of the human purposes which that indicates would be rendered impossible. The measure of mutual limitation is not dependent upon the amount of power summoned by the law, but by the realization of these moral purposes, both individual and social.

Here lies the source of the inviolable sphere of freedom proper to every man. Limitation of liberty must never go so far as to make it impossible for an individual to do what his conscience says is a moral duty. But even outside this

sphere and in his violation of moral law—so long as that violation concerns his own individual moral purpose and does not deprive others of something to which they have a legitimate ethical claim—man cannot be compelled by human authority to do his duty or abide by rules of conduct.

"In principle these contentions are indubitably correct. For modern peoples, the value of freedom has become especially clear since Christianity brought into the world its concept of the value of personality. We all desire to build our own intimate kingdom; we wish, in those matters which concern only ourselves, to be responsible only to God and our consciences; we desire a space inside of which we can move as we see fit, and into which the state and its force cannot enter. But the boundary line to which we can extend this space, the point at which we conflict with the claims of community life, is not something which has been fixed once and for all. Even today the effort to enlarge this area conflicts with the tendency to restrict it in the interest of the common weal. Such opposition is understandable when one notices the number of ways in which freedom can function. The single right of freedom disintegrates into a number of 'freedom rights.'

"The first and loftiest among these is the right of religious freedom, conceived of in two senses: first the independence of religious conviction from every form of compulsion, and secondly the claim to be left unhampered in the affairs of one's religious life. So long as there is question only of religious thoughts and sentiments, freedom in both senses is as absolute as it is obvious. Whatever happens in a man's innermost soul, is his own business and remains impervious to outside constraint. There has, how-

ever, been a great deal of controversy in all ages regarding the proclamation of these thoughts and sentiments. We need at once to emphasize and adhere to the principle that nobody can rightly be compelled to any religious act or mood. This does not, of course, refer to children. The more clearly the essence of religion is understood, the more definitely it is conceived of as a relation between the individual soul and God which is based upon the revelation of God to mankind, the more untenable becomes the idea that force is of any avail here. Every attempt of this character, though it may have succeeded in producing the external semblance of religious action, is an offense against the sacredness of religious conviction. But it is naturally much more difficult to decide about the other part of the question—whether the right should be conceded to everyone of performing all acts which correspond with his religious thought and sentiment, which are conceived of as binding upon conscience, and whether missionary work for one's own beliefs through teaching and writing is permissible. Here we confront an element which is of the greatest importance to society generally.

"If we wish to live peacefully with our fellowmen, as the law of moral order advises, we must avoid not only all attacks upon their bodily life and their property, but also all actions which will seriously offend their feelings. This is the mandate of charity, but may also become a matter of justice. The state punishes attacks upon individual honor, and does so because a good name and a quietly recognized or presupposed honorableness are necessarily required for the success of one man's commerce with others. It also punishes scandal which is noised abroad, and

here it protects feelings which it assumes are normal to its citizens, respected by them, and held to be important if the community welfare is to be promoted. Of course the extent and sacredness of such feeling varies with peoples and times. The Athenian poet Phrynichos had to pay a fine of a thousand drachmas because when a tragedy of his was produced the spectators melted into tears. That is rather an extreme case. But it is always true that whenever a definite religious conviction lives in a people, pronouncements and actions which are contradictory to it will seem a violation of justifiable feelings; and the sense of outrage will be greater the more definite and comprehensive the common religion is.

"Where unity of religious belief exists and where a faith practiced for centuries has become a national custom, every real or apparent denial of even a single article of creed and every attack upon any practice will be accepted as an outrage against the popular conscience and the popular sense of what is fitting—yes, even as an attack upon the ultimate basis of community life. For all moral duties and legal ordinances are not only surrounded with a halo by religion, but they do indeed bear an intimate and necessary relation with religion. Everything would topple were not religion accepted as the unshakable and inviolable fundament. It follows, then, that it is quite possible that in contrast to what has been said above regarding the nature of religion, precisely the high value placed upon it by a people will lead to measures which may seem, particularly to those who are not religious in the same sense, an oppression of conscience. One must bear this in mind in

order to understand the implacable rigor with which during earlier centuries of the Christian era no-conformists were persecuted. The Catholic religion in its complete form, with the whole substance of ecclesiastical teaching and practice, did not exist beside the state but was most closely bound up with the state. Such a thing as a civil community separated from a religious and ecclesiastical foundation did not exist. Even the possibility of such a thing did not occur to the people of that time. For this reason—and not merely because of the action of the Church—heresy was considered a crime and the heretic an enemy of the social order who was to be fought with all the brutality which belonged to law in that epoch.

"But where unity of belief does not exist or has ceased to exist, religious feeling may exist undiminished inside the various confessions, but justice, as the universal norm of community life, can protect only those things which are common to all. The law may, perhaps, threaten to punish scandal given by public blasphemy or similar actions, but it must, generally speaking, allow everyone to do what seems to him good and right in matters of religion. As a matter of fact, I do not believe that under contemporary circumstances any further restriction of freedom of conscience is possible. It is not so much that large numbers of people have lost their faith in supernatural reality as well as all sense of the value of religion, but that freedom is the only weapon with which the modern world can again be conquered for religion. Spiritual things cannot be attained with material means, they cannot be safeguarded by material barriers. Certainly there is no right to ignor-

ance and error, but the faithful must bear the fact that the *sola fides* which they venerate is misunderstood and despised by a multitude of those who have other faiths or no faith at all. For this they can compensate by placing themselves more entirely in the service of religion."

III

The Catholic Church is precisely 1776 years older than the United States government. It may, therefore, be pardoned for having lived so long in ignorance of what was some day to become the greatest republic in the world. During most of its lifetime, it dealt with entirely different varieties of states and addressed to them words of counsel which would be quite inappropriate if despatched to Mr. Coolidge. Of course this is only part of a correct generalization that the Church has only recently lived in a democratic environment. One may assert that the task of getting accustomed to the new order, in which so much that seemed august and desirable was suddenly declared out of date, was exceedingly difficult for many Catholics. In all parts of Europe there were groups who zealously associated "the throne and the altar," fancying as they did that the fall of one implied the collapse of the other. And yet from the very beginning they had been warned against this delusion and assured that the kingdom of Christ is not like any other kingdom—is, in fact, not of this world.

Always and everywhere the essential indifferentism of the Church to forms of government or culture has abided as a principle, even though it may occasionally have been lost sight of in practice. Like all other people, Christians get accustomed to some things or habits, like them very much, and hate to surrender them. But the parting comes inevitably with death, and just as inevitably in the course of history.

Catholicism is not monarchical, imperial or democratic, just as it is neither Greek nor Roman. The only thing about which it is certain, the only thing which it knows will not change, is the world beyond. From a practical point of view this is an eminently sane and helpful position, however much cold water it may seem to throw upon wild enthusiasts for something or other. The gentleman from Toledo may arise to declare, and believe every word of what he says, that twentieth-century industrial democracy as practiced in the United States is the greatest thing that ever happened. But obviously Signor Mussolini does not agree with him, and quite as obviously Mr. Walter Lippmann (whose business it is to assail Mussolini in the columns of the *New York World*) does not either. In short, the gentleman from Toledo has to pick his audience in order to get applause. If his business consisted in selling some product in various portions of the world, he would probably keep the major part of his political philosophy to himself.

He might even, were he sufficiently intelligent, arrive at the conclusion that "there is no arguing about tastes" in the realm of government any more than in museums of art.

The Catholic Church is, from a practical point of view, in something of this very situation. It has extremely valuable, difficult missionary work to do. Even as things are now, that work is jeopardized constantly by some of its too human representatives who carry nationalistic and cultural convictions into the sphere of religion. Quite apart, however, from all questions of expediency, it would be wrong for the Church to declare itself about human government for the reason that conclusions about this are the result of an experience not at all its own. There are just two aspects of politics which concern it. The first is a matter of diplomatic negotiation whereby the work of the Church inside a given country and under given conditions may be assured a fair chance. This, in our modern time, is entrusted to a corps of officials directly attached to the Holy See, and sometimes accredited to states as legates and nuncios. These often arrive at what are known as "Concordats"—contracts signed by governments and the Church, guaranteeing that such and such regulations shall be in force during a given time. They also try to remove causes of friction existing in various places, to foster Catholic endeavor by encouraging efforts that seem promising, and to build up respect

for the political integrity and helpfulness of the Holy See.

During the World War, this aspect of Catholic ecclesiastical government became particularly prominent. Pope Benedict XV, working in harmony with his assistants, maintained what is termed "neutrality" towards all the belligerent powers. Of course there could be no question of neutrality in the strictest sense, the Vatican having long before ceased to be a civil or military power. The policy was rather to use the good offices of the Church in behalf of conciliation, relief of sufferers and prisoners of war, and sound ultimate reconstruction. It had been hoped that the common faith which Catholics in the beleaguered nations shared, and the respect which all entertained for the Holy See, would help to keep alive the sense of honor and to foster the desire for a just peace. Unfortunately the world was too violently disturbed to permit the full realization of this hope. On both sides of the front excited Catholics themselves brought accusations of partiality and timidity against the Vatican. Only after the solemn summons to peace which bore the Pope's signature had been left unheeded, after Europe had become indeed a bankrupt continent which echoed the despair of disillusioned millions, did the Church's plea for charity become wholly clear.

This plea bore a direct relation to the second aspect of the Papal relation to political affairs. By vir-

tue of its authority as the custodian and teacher of moral law, the Church professes the right to declare that certain forms of social conduct are correct and others wrong. If, as has been the case in Soviet Russia, a government deliberately ignores just principles of state action as well the legitimate place which is religion's in every human society, the Popes would certainly shirk an important duty if they remained silent. It is always understood, of course, that the data upon which the official opinion of the Vatican is based may be incomplete or incorrect. All that is claimed in this respect is that the international character of Rome, its unusual position at the mouth of the human stream, render it an exceptionally good place in which to acquire accurate information. The Holy See in our time is not in the least theatrical or pompously autodidactic. It is a highly personal institution at which an immense amount of detail work is carried through, in a spirit of doing the best possible under existing circumstances.

No political statement issued by the Vatican is, however, automatically infallible or anything of that sort. The rightness of the Papacy is considered incontrovertible only when its utterances restate or organically develop sacred Christian tradition of faith and morals. That is why obedience to Rome should it declare anything unmoral or irreligious—a situation unthinkable to Catholics—would not, in this instance, be binding upon the religious conscience. Let

us project an utterly impossible theory and suppose, for instance, that the Church suddenly announced that loans made by Catholic institutions in Germany through United States banks need not be repaid. If such a thing were to happen (and, of course, it never would), no Catholic would dream of accepting the decision. His faith and morals repose upon a written and unwritten constitution which centuries have not been able to change in any essential respect. To this vast, logically organized and hallowed deposit of truth and law the Church goes back day after day for guidance and certainty.

We may now go on to consider a final question, which to some extent is the crucial point in this discussion: Is a conflict between the Papacy, as the government of the Catholic Church, and the United States likely to arise? And if it should, to whom would the average Catholic citizen owe allegiance? The answer may best be given under two headings. First, any quarrel which the Pope as an individual might *possibly* enter into with the United States would at most have a repercussion in sentiment. Suppose, for instance, that he wished to visit the United States and were refused permission to enter. Catholics here would doubtless resent the insult, if any happened to be involved, just as Episcopalians would resent a decision to turn back the Archbishop of Canterbury were he to arrive at Ellis Island for a conference with Bishop Manning. It would be their

duty, however, to accept the government's decision.

In the second place, a conflict between the Papacy and the United States regarding a matter of faith and morals would be conceivable only in case that certain measures suddenly made it impossible for Catholics to practice their religion or to abide by their moral principles. For instance, even if the Methodist Church somehow became the official ecclesiastical institution, the Vatican would not be impelled to protest so long as the freedom of conscience fostered by the Constitution were suffered to abide. Should a Methodist majority decide, however, to alter the fundamental law of the land and put down the Catholic cult, the answer would have to be either a vigorous minority protest or readiness to endure persecution. It is also true, as a general rule, that the Vatican in our time does not favor self-centered political organization by Catholics as such within a given country. Pope Pius XI has forbidden Polish priests to become involved in partisan affairs, and the Church in Mexico is averse to the organization of Catholics as such into a political group. That is why all talk of "Romanist" greediness for power is so much stuff and nonsense, caused by a complete ignorance of the nature of contemporary Catholic missionary labor and of the manner in which the Papacy guides the vast flock entrusted to its care.

Occasional utterances by prelates and laymen may, of course, give rise to anxiety on the part of those

who do not at all suspect how much talking is required to induce Catholics to accomplish even essential tasks. Mark Twain, as will be remembered from a previous remark, failed in business because he actually believed that Catholics would have to buy his *Life of Pope Leo XIII* under pain of mortal sin! But verily if the Church could induce all who have been baptized into her communion to do the elementary thing of going to the sacraments once a year, she would fancy that a kind of millennium had dawned. The great majority of Catholics in the United States have only the vaguest notion of the Syllabus of Pius IX; and I wager that none of those who do understand it has ever fancied, with certain zealous one-hundred-percent pamphleteers, that it condemned democratic government, freedom of inquiry or comment, and genuine modern progress. Dealing as it did with the historical phenomenon known as "nineteenth century European liberalism"—flogged by Nietzsche and Carlyle, scoffed at by Ibsen and Max Scheler, and lately anathematized by the generation which followed the war—it may not be a model of clear phrasing or even of tact, but it proved that the Church had not altogether gone daft. Similarly the statement of Pope Leo XIII that the situation in which Catholicism found itself in the United States was not an ideal situation must also be properly understood. Certainly an institution as old and venerable as the Church can easily imagine a

place where it would be more entirely at home than in a land where Grand Wizards of various sorts appear as regularly as tornados, and where two-thirds of the social elite regard the word "Catholic" as a sign that somebody is applying for a job as butler.

After all a little common-sense will reveal the fact that the millions of people who go to Catholic churches in this country have not joined a cabal, a murderers' club, or even a political alliance. Most of them make the sacrifices they do for one reason—the religious society to which they belong has, in their opinion, a clear title to the one claim it has always persistently, heroically and vigorously made for itself—the claim that it is the Communion of Saints.

CHAPTER FIVE

CURRENT CONTRASTS

I

THOSE who have borne with me so far will have considered, I hope, a certain amount of evidence fairly presented to support the opinion that relations between the Catholic Church and the United States (seen both as a nation and as a community of citizens) are not at all abnormal. To sum up this evidence one may discern a good analogy in a comparison of the American Bar Association with the American Medical Association. Each respects the other's principles, both live tranquilly side by side. Neither will conclude that because individual members of the other group are baldheaded or vicious, baldheadedness and vice are insisted upon as qualifications for membership. Of course it is true that disagreement or even strife between the two is not impossible. Conceivably the physicians might resolve to encourage the practice of polygamy; conceivably the jurists might then rise in high dudgeon to remind everyone of the law and the common welfare. Such conflict would obviously

not, however, be rooted in the nature of the two Associations. It would merely be the result of a given situation which demanded consideration and settlement as a situation. Just as much can be maintained regarding all disputes that may possibly arise between the Catholic Church and the United States —or even between Catholics as Catholics and Catholics as American citizens. In so far as principle goes, no opposition exists.

But going from the realm of theory to what happens in the everyday world, one can immediately discern a number of what may be called current contrasts. Some of these have already been alluded to—differences between the way in which Catholics live and the way other people live, and also differences between the way Catholics *ought* to live and the way other people ought to live. Just now our concern is directed to what may be termed more or less clearly institutionalized cultural contrasts, which are ordinary topics of conversation and regarding which there is considerable misapprehension. A very little reflection upon these will, I believe, enable us to arrive at a tentative idea of what influence Catholics might possibly exert upon American culture, as well as, in turn, of those modifications of specifically Catholic culture which may have been effected by environment. Unfortunately the undertaking is difficult because no one has as yet attempted it with any great honesty or scholarship. I do not presume

to be able to supply what is missing. We shall merely note a few matters which stare one in the face and clamor for attention.

Newspaper readers cannot have failed to notice how uniformly deferential the press is to Catholics. No really significant event inside the Church goes unchronicled in the news columns, and sometimes—as during the recent Eucharistic Congress—the best reporters outdo themselves writing colorful accounts of purely ecclesiastical proceedings. As a general rule, editorial comment is also careful not to offend Catholic feelings. Governor Smith's portion of the recent *Atlantic Monthly* controversy was received, for instance, with an approval so hearty and unanimous that the historians of debate, both living and dead, must have sat up startled at such enthusiastic agreement. But if one gets a little farther into the daily or weekly paper, if one reads the comment on books, sciences, social principle, drama or what not, the climate suddenly changes. There is seldom any flippancy about Catholics, but the world which is summoned up for discussion is one in which every shred of the life peculiar to the Church has been removed with a kind of vacuum cleaner. Read any major metropolitan journal carefully for ten days, and you will conclude that—nine-tenths of its thinking about Catholic matters is done from the business office.

And you will be right. A modern newspaper, as

Colonel McCormick of the *Chicago Tribune* has bluntly assured us, exists to collect money from people who want to know what is going on in the world. It is an axiom among editors that this money will not be forthcoming if the journal becomes entangled in religious controversy, and particularly if it ignores the numerical strength of Catholics. The newspaper realizes very well, of course, that its polite urbanity does not reflect the real attitude of most Americans toward the Church. Is there anybody so naïve as to believe, for instance, that journalistic comment upon Governor Smith's afore-mentioned letter really meant that millions of citizens had been convinced over night that their visions of "Roman domination" were so much nonsense? We all know better. We are all perfectly aware that the Pope is being discussed and denounced as warmly as ever from the tops of twenty thousand assorted cracker barrels. Mr. Franklin Ford can always get a sizable audience for his radio oratory and is exempt from worry about overhead expense; and millions of people who would not befuddle themselves by listening in for what he has to say feel in their hearts that the accession of a Catholic to the presidency would be a deplorable national degradation. Newspaper men know all this and they know, too, that handling Catholic subscribers is really not very difficult. Beyond a certain number of matters which can easily be printed on

a very small card, the business has an absolutely free hand.

Let me hasten to add that no accusation is brought against the press as having an "official" mind which it displays to the public and another mind used when thinking or reading are in order. Comment moves with absolute aloofness from Catholic points of view through the world of affairs and culture simply because that world is one in which Catholic points of view do not exist. A paper as able, fair and successful as the *New York Times* would obviously not open its columns to a weekly letter from M. Paul Souday, French anti-clerical who distorts and minimizes everything done by Catholics in the contemporary literature of his country, were it not for the fact that so few people are interested in, or know anything about, the contemporary Catholic renaissance in France. A half-dozen other journals, scrupulously fair in the matter of news, print reams of copy about books and philosophies which might well prevent a Christian citizen anxious to safeguard the faith of his household from sending in his subscription. In all this country there is not a single notable literary or philosophic newspaper page of which one can say that it is written by a convinced Catholic or even an uncompromising Christian. Of course there is hardly any protest, let alone any endeavor to enter the lists.

Numerical strength! Many persons respect it, but it remains the weakest, the most unwholesome, the least spiritual of all forms of power. It can be organized in defense of only a few shibboleths, none of which permit of discriminating statement. It antagonizes groups that are numerically weak, just as it annoys those who possess individuality of mind. Catholics in this country can kill a motion-picture which is offensive to their religious (or racial) convictions—but they cannot and do not accomplish anything to render the art of the cinema less stupidly sentimental and more worthy of citizens come to the age of reason. They can prevent the National Educational Association from writing into federal law some proposals it holds desirable—but they are unable to suggest any valuable idea to that Association. They can intimidate a publisher by threatening to boycott him on account of some book held to be offensive—but they are powerless to get a reading for any books of their own.

The exercise of numerical power is attractive and even useful within limits, but there are times when the sincere Catholic longs to forget all such arithmetic. Too much concentration upon this subject is a fault which seems to go with all democratic climates; and certainly a country as deferential to numbers as is the United States encourages any crowd to show its teeth to an enemy. Very likely one may legitimately say that here is a real modification of

essential Catholic culture by new world surroundings. Even inside the Church organization of every sort has been plunged into with a fervor quite astonishing, especially when one sees that the "business before the house" is often nothing more serious than the election of officers. An organization is, however, always a crowd, and catering to it means flattering the selective processes of a crowd. That is why so many societies with very august names are constantly fed with boxing bouts and gross comedy, hackneyed jazz concerts and indescribably bad oratory. These are what most people like, and these are forthcoming.

It does not pay to be sensitive about such matters. If people enjoy a cheap edition of Mr. Paul Whiteman, let us join in their gratefulness when the edition is produced. Hard-pressed clergymen are glad to use every drum that will make a noise to "bring their parishioners together" and to strengthen with professedly homely rivets the walls of a spiritual house always beleaguered. But obviously it is distressing to note that nothing else is wanted. God knows what is the legacy of traditional Catholic popular civilization, which in a more spontaneous time created the mystery plays and much beside. We are unable to calculate the toll in spiritual nobility which we have paid to the devices and constraints of an industrial era. Watch a typical crowd chew gum through a vapid movie and the accompanying sugary

melodies. All are men and women a generation or so removed from European simplicities—men and women most of whose fathers knew community song and pageant, the processions of Corpus Christi and the *carnivale*. Then go to Notre Dame University, and let the eye take in the symmetry of a perfect landscape, radiant with the superiority of art to mere mind. Fifty years ago the place was a cow-pasture fringed with wilderness. It grew to what it is through the efforts of a simple German religious who, having but a little of education and training, came here as one of a million immigrants. There is the material of reverie in such contrasts.

A kind of terrible contempt for thought and loveliness has settled upon American Catholicism, not indeed because of any ugliness inherent in religion, but because these millions of men, women and children have been poor for so long. Somehow they do not associate the concerns of culture with themselves. Persons still quite young can remember when a Catholic young man, studying at a high-school or college, was invariably believed to be a candidate for the priesthood. It was almost unthinkable that he should be busy with books for some other reason. Today, of course, there is something like a stampede of young people into religious schools of higher learning, but the movement is pathetically without leadership and almost without a goal. "Number" is still the watch-

word, an ominous levelling of minds and talents is even now virtually imposed by opinion. The problem created by the fact that this mass movement must necessarily be leavened, must prepare to receive wisely the varied good things which are added unto the kingdom of God, is surely one of the greatest ever confronted in the history of the Catholic Church.

II

The solution of this problem of leavening is dependent, of course, upon those who are willing and qualified to give it their attention. Though it be somewhat bold to say with Hilaire Belloc that Rousseau changed the world with a great literary style, though the art of words is not an infallible recipe of revolution, the things which that art sets forth attractively—morals, æsthetics, thought, science—do constitute culture as the modern man understands it. As much can be said for the other media of intellectual and emotional exchange—the authoritative lecture-platform, the laboratory, the drama, the machinery of social tendencies. Never before has leadership been so much a matter of ability to convey ideas or substitutes for ideas. Oscar Wilde's famous remark that cattle have conformed to artistic notions of what their kind ought to look like may be faulty

natural history, but it is relatively a satisfactory interpretation of human conduct.

When one bears such facts in mind, the true weakness of Catholics in the United States is revealed. Among those who are creating public consciousness in contemporary America, for better or worse, singularly few stand inside the pale of the Church. So limited is Catholic force in the long cordon which stretches from the sonnet to the machine-gun that if it ebbed away entirely the loss would hardly be discerned. The names assembled in *Who's Who* do not (let us hope) tell us everything about the mental, moral, educational, contemplative and active greatness of the nation. They do manage nevertheless to give us a fairly accurate idea of who is leading and influencing public opinion, and who is determining what American conduct will be tomorrow. And if one proceeds then to make something like a statistical analysis of the *Who's Who* evidence, certain conclusions startling from a Catholic point of view are inevitable. Roughly speaking, at least one out of every six Americans is affiliated with the Church. But of the first hundred *Who's Who* names, only two are those of Catholic men. Still more astonishing is the fact that a name like "Kelly" remains quite without the associations one might reasonably expect to find coupled with it, while the name of "Walsh"—perhaps the most definitely Catholic title

in *Who's Who*—is shared equally by persons outside the Church.[1]

These comparatively arresting figures do not, of course, afford a complete index to the quality of the Catholic body. They simply indicate to what a trifling extent United States public opinion, deferential though it is to Catholic numbers, has been influenced by ideas emanating from Catholic sources. But if these ideas are the motor energies of all we can term civilization, if they determine what the nation accepts as worth-while products of the spirit, our conclusion must be that the America in which Catholics live—apart, of course, from the world of religious experience properly so called—is being constructed for them by somebody else. In so far as such "somebodies" are creating an atmosphere amenable to the work of the Church, there is no reason why one should not contentedly accept it—even though a certain uncomfortable emotion of having failed to do one's part may spoil the pleasure.

[1] Since these sentences were written, Ellsworth Huntington and Leon F. Whitney, both competent statisticians, have dealt with the matter in a paper contributed to the August 1927 number of the *American Mercury*. They conclude that only 7 out of every 100,000 Catholic men are named in *Who's Who*. The number of Catholic women in each 100,000 is less than one. This is compared with the ratio of 11 per 100,000 among the Adventists, and of 20 among the Jews. Doubtless these figures call for some verification, but it is doubtful that scrutiny will find them notably incorrect.

As a matter of fact, however, there is very little reason to believe that anybody else will cheerfully do the work, the exceedingly difficult work, which Catholics ought manfully to accomplish for themselves. We may properly agree, therefore, that when an impartial spectator sees the Church functioning primarily as an organization, or as a kind of trust company for wisdom inherited from the male builders of Christendom, he may excusably surmise it destined to awake some day and find itself in an alien world.

What is the reason for this situation? Certainly not racial quality, "clerical repression," or anything of that sort. There is not a single stock or stratum in which Catholics are unheard of, and there is no dearth of encouragement from many pulpits. History tells us who saved the learning of the antique world, and who were the associates of Dante and Fra Angelico. I cannot help thinking that we shall have to seek the explanation primarily in the system of education which Catholics have developed for themselves in this country. Naturally this does not mean there is anything essentially wrong with the system. It developed out of a sane analysis of conditions existing throughout the United States, and out of a heroic resolve to surmount those conditions. Catholics saw that the public schools as established by law could never assure that religious training which any parent who realizes the meaning either of

adolescence or of maturity must desire for his children.

Had it not been for the grotesque stupidity of Protestants, we would long since have built up in this country a system of denominational schools subsidized and to some extent supervised by the state. This idea of education is really the only one normal to the general American religious outlook, which does not accept any creed as official but which does quite emphatically claim the adjective "Christian" for itself. But the average citizen was so dead sure that the "public school" would stay Christian, that any admission to the contrary would be a concession to despicable Catholics, that the hopeless blunder got never-ending salvos of applause. Today people are beginning to discard their filmy spectacles. Voters are frantically outlawing evolution, and a good many Doctors of Divinity are trying to append some form of religious instruction to the regular school curriculum. Protestant committees are coming to varied interesting conclusions about the problem, but so far I have read of no resolution upbraiding the educational blindness of the past one hundred years.

Yet it certainly was blindness. The only criticism American Catholics ever made of the public school system has been justified to the last jot. They admired the equipment, the educational methods, the staffing of this system. They helped pay for it all

as the law required. But they kept on saying that if you were really anxious to promote *religious* living, you could not adopt a purely *secular* preparation for living. Much ire was aroused by this reiterated statement. Dozens of deluded mortals talked of "unpatriotic motives," antiquated ideals, hopeless obscurantism. As if it were not the essence of sound American tradition to allow the churches to keep alive in the hearts of men the realization of Christ —to preserve even so elemental a human possession as memory of the soul! Having had some apprenticeship myself as an educator, I am seldom bowled over by manifestations of ignorance. Yet I confess that the experience of being questioned by worried youths who had just finished reading *Hamlet* as to precisely what portion of the earth's surface was meant by the "undiscovered country" of the soliloquy has been a trifle disconcerting. The "Rock of Ages" has never been "blasted," as somebody once reported. It has simply been relegated to a department of information the door to which was locked; and many a hoodwinked dominie rejoiced that this was so.

Well, the educational task which Catholics shouldered was not easy because it happened to be necessary. One needs a great deal of money to build schools, and satisfactory teachers are not supplied in carload lots. Owing to a marvelous readiness to make sacrifices, the machinery of elementary education was somehow assembled and kept in repair. It

may not always have been above reproach, but at least it creaked and shuffled along. The important point to be noted here regarding it is that it absorbed, like some tremendous fissure in the ground, all those who were really fitted to promote distinctly Catholic cultural activity. Nobody knows how many singularly able men and women have put on religious habits and have borne the drudgery of unrelieved pedagogy during these long, hard years. Of course there were never enough religious to do the work, and lay teachers were excluded because there was never enough money to pay them. More than one Gerald Griffin became a Christian Brother. More than one daughter of some Protestant divine or professor, a convert to the Church, surrendered her gifts to the spare class-room that stood next to the convent. Go softly when you meet a nun busy with her flock of shuffling little ones: she may have in her soul the crushed pollen of Sappho and Isabella, sacrificed with a sacred carelessness. Surely it is not unlikely that some of all these might have done better things than write a Doktorarbeit or name an undiscovered beetle.

But though this vast toil has been heroic and necessary, it has cost more than anybody can estimate. It is not merely that the tremendous enterprise of parochial education harnessed the Catholic élite to a treadmill and drank in fruitful energies like some invisible giant sponge. One has the right to expect

an army to stand by its guns. An equally crucial fact is that meanwhile the general Catholic body incurred a serious handicap. A form of training different from, even isolated from, all that was being employed to mould personalities in the world outside; a great sacrifice of opportunity for social contact of the invigorating and informing kind:—these to a considerable extent cut Catholics off from natural participation in the general cultural development. The isolation was not, of course, so evident when only the elementary stages of education had to be reckoned with. But as time went on, more and more young people wanted to receive further training—to attend high-school and college. Theoretically the same reasons for providing them with an environment in which religion was everywhere visible continued to hold good. Indeed the thought of surrendering a child whom one had guarded during eight years to a system of non-religious education probably harassed more good people than had worried about that child in the first place.

Therefore secondary schools conducted under exclusively Catholic auspices began to appear wherever possible. Inevitably they presented the same problems of equipment and staffing as has been forced upon the Church by the elementary school situation, and just as inevitably they established the view that education is primarily a matter of moral and religious guidance. It was, I think, perfectly logical

to hold that "in order to carry on the work of religious training" as many institutions as were at all obtainable ought to be provided. But—and the point is surely of the utmost importance—there were several practical aspects of the matter which, however frequently they might be overlooked, would inevitably force themselves upon everyone. Funds, for instance, are always limited. Money does not lie about going to waste, and when you have spent all you own there simply isn't any more. Year after year since the Renaissance the mechanical equipment needed for higher education, the essence of which has come to be investigation and exploration, has grown steadily more vast and complex. Though a man busied himself with no less frivolous a problem than why his grandmother constantly rubbed her left finger across her right eyebrow, he would require a hundred thousand volumes and, perhaps, a laboratory. It is impossible for any group of people to supply these things in more than a comparatively few places. But the Catholic dream of education meant there had to be many such places.

The problem of teaching was, however, even more acute, for reasons which one need not enumerate beyond the primary one of original sin. In order to supply men and women for the work of Catholic secondary education, it was necessary to skim the cream from the elementary school staff, churn this into shape as best one could, and carry on. For-

tunately for American Catholics, the dissolution of religious orders in various sections of Europe brought to this country a large number of first-rate educators who felt their way into new conditions with astonishing tact. But even so two distinct and regrettable weaknesses were manifested. First, the elementary schools suffered. Teachers there were obliged to take on a double burden with all the sacrifice of personal development that implied, and in many places teachers could not be had at all. Secondly, the higher schools simply could not get the faculties they required. Kind fortune and time are both required to produce these, and both imply a system of preparatory study which, like all other ultimates of human civilization, cannot be builded in a day.

Finally the success of all training depends upon the rightness of the method underlying it. In so far as secondary education is concerned, Catholics were fortunate in their inheritance of the great Jesuit *ratio studiorum*—the finest system of schooling for adolescent boys ever put into practice anywhere, and (regardless of the fact that modifications have been introduced) a dependable recipe for manhood. But quite obviously much of the Jesuit success is due to the circumstance that it is not mass education by persons drafted for the task, but individualized instruction given by men prepared in an excellent normal school. Similarly, various teaching sisterhoods

inherited the art of conducting *pensions* for young women; and by dint of much truly feminine adaptability and sacrifice, a series of first-rate academies was created in the United States. Here again success has never been measured in terms of arithmetic. The schools which have counted are those in which competent teachers did as much work as a human being can reasonably be expected to perform.

Of course there are other commendable forms of Catholic secondary education; and in general one feels that adolescence is precisely the time when religious guidance is vital and creative. Certainly, in spite of the difficulties which circumstances imposed upon it, this guidance has proved extremely serviceable in the United States, where there is no greater problem than the growing boy or girl who knows nothing excepting secularized surroundings. It is really only when the college appears on the horizon that we confront the familiar destructive last straw. Catholics have not only lacked the means and personnel with which to carry out their extensive theoretical program in the department of collegiate and university education, but they were without a traditional foundation upon which to establish it. During several centuries the magnificent old schools, the Oxfords and Paduas, which had grown strong in the spirit of Christendom, were isolated from the Church that retained practically no schools for the higher education of laymen. Accordingly one of two

things had to be done: either such methods as the *ratio studiorum* (which had never been adapted to more than secondary training) could be extended to meet the requirements, or a new system could be established on the basis of the preparatory theological seminary. In practice the second was usually decided for.

The proof of this statement lies in the fact that (in so far as cultural subjects were concerned) the teaching has normally been purely formal instruction given by men intensively trained for a wholly different kind of life than that envisaged by their subject. In a word: the priest-professor in a theological seminary can properly teach English composition to his students because he knows how they will use that in their practical lives; but the same professor in a lay cultural college must effect a difficult adjustment of his mentality to the practical necessities of his student. Where he could profit by leisure and additional training, this professor succeeded excellently. But in general the difficulty was evident and has led to the introduction of the lay professor into Catholic higher education, with comparatively anomalous results. The lay professor is not a religious teacher, but simply an instructor in a subject which he has been taught to know by graduate study or practical life; and if he is a competent man, he can seldom accept the restrictions of money and opportunity imposed by the poverty of

the Catholic college. For this college is doomed to poverty by the fact that, in theory, it can never be permanent. Since the general educational object is to provide religious instruction for all, and since the number of this "all" is constantly increasing, a new college or university must be started (and is started) as soon as there is a ghost of a chance of success.

A truly tragic situation! If progress has nevertheless been made, if many good colleges do exist, the explanation can only be the truly stupendous expenditure of energy by individual teachers and organizers. No one can deny that the Jesuits have developed at Marquette a genuine modern university, that Sisters' colleges have very often realized a fine ideal of feminine education (never the same thing as masculine education) and have furnished the bulk of Catholic cultural energy, that such foundations as the Benedictine St. Anselm's Priory at Washington, D. C., are real contributions to the work of higher study, and that a number of laymen have made heavy personal sacrifices for the cause. Turn on these and as many other bright lights as you can find, however, and the dual problem still remains. First, when Catholics were obliged to build up their own system of elementary and secondary education, they began to drain their resources. In theory they are now committed to carry this drain on into the infinite—an attempt altogether impossible because the resources are not merely finite, but much less un-

limited than what can be commanded by the world outside.

Secondly—and here the argument is brought round to the point at which it started—this process of draining carried with it the very ore which higher education was expected to produce. It harnessed scholarly leadership to the routine of pedagogy; and it deprived those who sat listening to the pedagogy of that leadership. One cannot say that such statistics as those indicated by *Who's Who* are an accurate formula for the total result, but they do point clearly to a result not attained. Even that which was enunciated as the central purpose—higher religious training—has not been achieved if we are to judge by concrete results. Our college men are still fed on an overdose of pamphlets; and the really excellent work of such priests as Fathers Heuser, Siegfried, Egan and Elliott is seldom mentioned in collegiate circles. So definite is the relation which now exists between higher education and the formation of public opinion, so obvious is the tendency among Protestants (a tendency alluded to previously) to transfer spiritual authority from the ministry to the professorate, that unless Catholics resolutely enter the field of scholarship and creative thinking one does not know what spiritual room will be left to them in the republic apart from purely religious activity inside the walls of the churches.

There are those who consider this sufficient, ap-

parently not pausing to reflect that such a point of view is exactly the one upon which Martin Luther took his stand as a reformer. Finding the Church "busy with many things," he asserted that religion was entirely a matter of the inside of the cup—and ended, naturally enough, by discovering that the cup could rust through from the outside. If only people would notice that when Christ upheld Mary against Martha He merely declared that she "hath chosen the best *part*"—*pars* in St. Jerome's Latin—and not *everything*. Baron von Hügel has some remarks on this matter which deserve a very wide attention:

> Religion requires the actuation of *all* man's faculties; it is in relation with *all* the other levels and ranges of man's experience. The sense of Beauty, the sense of Truth, the sense of Goodness—above all, the sense of the inadequacy of all our purely human expressions of them all, and yet that these various senses are not vain or merely subjective and simply human: all these finally imply, all are necessary to, all are in relation with, the full and healthy life of religion.

Right it is that the will to accomplish this full development of all faculties divinely placed in man, this brave resolve to hold the inner citadel and yet conquer the world beyond, is hazardous and sometimes unduly distracting. But the Church was not made for leisure, and its holiest moments have not been those in which it sought leisure. After all,

Rome is not in the wilderness. It remains an imperial city.

One may say, therefore, that the problem of culture—I use the word in no precious sense, but simply as a convenient term to express the blossoming of the whole heart and mind of man—has become a crucial American Catholic problem. Doubtless it will be solved without the help of much advice from me. But I cannot help seeing from a wide private correspondence with men of influence during the past three years, that the situation outlined in the foregoing paragraphs has engrossed the attention of many and has become the topic of earnest meditation. And surely the entire American community is interested in seeing that Catholics bring to the common life those riches of the soul which their spiritual energy itself bids them produce. In so far as the existing dearth is the outgrowth of a situation created by educational difficulties, there is particular need for a frank consideration of the practical aspects of the problem and for a readiness not to allow prepossessions, however attractive, to stand in the way of development.

III

Is such a thing as a definitely Catholic culture possible in the modern time? Is there really a background which could absorb and support a new mani-

festation of energy like that which performed the seeming miracle of the Middle Ages? Certainly the most pessimistic answer (and there are many pessimistic answers nowadays) which could be given to these questions is to think of perpendicular gothic every time one mentions Christian art. The everlasting reproduction of gargoyles is nothing less than a denial of everlasting life. True though it be that Chartres is the most beautiful place on earth, it is not a modern person's residence and not even a model for a modern person's residence. The cathedral expressed a mediaeval community idea of a spiritual home; but just as we can no longer quite credit the science which the sculpture of that time visualized in stone, so also we have personalities which simply will not stay wholly awake under dreamy thirteenth-century arches. It is well we should be reverent in their presence and homesick for them—but a thousand homesicknesses cannot put up what Carlyle called "my own four walls." The proof is that the outstanding cathedral lovers of our time—Huysmans as well as Henry Adams—dreamed things at Chartres that never were and never can be real. Inspiring and ennobling as is the beauty of all those marvelous minsters, they are not our own hearth-stones.

Though the world in which the Church finds itself today were a thousand times more perverse and chaotic than it is, it would not yet be nearly so in-

famous as the civilization into which Christ came with His redemptive will. We have only to share that will in our paltry but still creative way in order to leap once again over the old impasses which keep us from numberless realizations of beatitude. Ruskin's idea that the modern artisan needs a purposive freedom of which he was deprived by a mechanistic concept of labor is great and true for better reasons even than those he named. Times in which the shoemaker has confidence that every peg he drives is a song in celestial ears, because it incarnates the humble creative activity in which his natural, personal gift is placed at the service of—is sacrificed for—men, would also be a genuinely Christian time. Not in ecstasy or theological learning merely, but in the faith, the confidence and the charity of us all, is the service of the Cross exemplified. Of all this the Middle Ages may be the best proof, but we should be wasting our time if we merely set out to repeat their demonstration.

Convictions something like these were in the hearts of those magnificent Jesuits who undertook during the sixteenth century to reconquer the spiritual world. They were a troop of the noblest among Spanish knights, filled to the brim with that heroism which, unfortunately, is the rarest and most quickly spent of human treasures; and they went northward through Europe, as they went with Francis Xavier to the world's end, like workmen or harvesters. In-

evitably their touch proved creative: old towns grew brilliant with rekindled fire, and the myriad forms of handiwork in which they had been engaged once more wriggled strangely and came to life. The intellect of that age was at a disadvantage because it had set to work upon unmalleable materials—classical languages, mathematical concepts, astronomical speculation. Things-in-themselves—such as the green of the grass, or fresh flowers—which an old mediaeval thinker like Alexander of Hales (or even Chaucer) had taken into his hands with something like the delighted wonderment of a child, would fade from view, would tumble from abstracted fingers, until finally their very existence would come to be termed unknowable. Similarly, political power was no longer a matter of gambling for pieces of land, for chateaux or treasure, or even the *Terre sainte*—but for that "power" which is the most intangible and least satisfying of the things for which men hunger. Even religious devotion had become a matter of hard and definite concepts, of predestination and merely interior living, so that the reverence with which St. Thomas had named all the senses in his song of the Eucharist was no longer shared or trusted.

Yet the Jesuits came marching heroically with a Church as large as the world, in which there was still room for all men and things. Germany had become the center of the movement towards dissolu-

tion; but nowhere else was the Jesuit effort to re-establish the unity of Christendom in terms of a new age more evident or successful. They revived, for instance, the habit of theatre-going which had nearly passed from memory. In Austria, Silesia and elsewhere they developed an art of drama which summed up the culture of the time and incidentally served them well. "The rapid return to the Catholic Church of Austria, which to a large extent had become Protestant during the sixteenth century, must in a considerable measure be ascribed to the influence of the Jesuit drama," says Dr. Max Wolff. Necessarily these members of a martial society remained faithful to their apologetic purpose. Yet even so they knew how to write plays in elegant Latin, to blend history, moral and allegory in a manner which thrilled spectators of that time. With remarkably cosmopolitan taste, dictated to some extent by the international character of their organization, they composed a repertory in which past and present, romance narrative and Germanic comedy, classical learning and exotic echoes from Mexico and other newly traveled countries, were agreeably blended. But the great poets,—Bidermann, Spanmüller and others,—forgotten now but admired then, were not the only factors in the triumph. The Jesuits developed a system of stage direction which was obviously a marvel of their time, employing all the devices of scenery, costumes and pantomime then

known and adding others of their own invention.

We should not care much, probably, for these dramatic spectacles. But they served bravely to accomplish a man-sized cultural as well as religious task, and they were the models before which all the humanistic playwrights sat and learned. The Jesuit influence warmed and stirred Germany, where men like the extraordinary classicist Gryphius were stimulated by it; Italy and France, where the Society erected theatres and opera-houses; in Holland, where a direct link in the chain of their activities is formed by the conversion to Catholicism of Vondel, greatest of Dutch poets and undoubtedly the progenitor of Milton's *Paradise Lost;* in Spain, where it merged gradually into the "golden age" of dramatic art sponsored by geniuses like Calderon and Lope de Vega; and in South America, where it called forth the first dramatic performances given in the new world. Of course the whole Catholic humanistic movement did not remain a Jesuit specialty, but proved its vitality by flowering into a cultural advance grouping all forms of religious expression.

The Spanish mystics—St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa, for instance—were humanists, taking Seneca with them on their lofty road to God as Dante had clung to the guidance of Vergil. A more striking exemplification of the spirit of the movement is, however, the work of Rubens, whose memory is affectionately recalled during this the 350th year after

his birth. Certainly nothing indicates more clearly the tepidity of contemporary religious culture than the fact that the work of this most Catholic of painters would be repudiated today, not because of a lack of artistic appeal (we are, conceivably, not yet so blind as that!) but because it would be considered disquieting and even shocking. "Being absolutely without the fear of living, he welcomed life heartily wherever he found it," says one of his biographers. Clinging to a concept of eros which Coventry Patmore later expounded in a more sublimated form, he conceded to the senses that part which the Creator has given them in the actual world without ever losing sight of the fact that the greatest of victories (and he was given to admiring nothing so much as victory) is the ascension of man to self-surrender. His assent to life was hazardous, of course: that assent had already been perilous in the garden of Eden. Nevertheless it was brave and it was shared by the whole Catholic life of the time.

For the Church, and more particularly for the Jesuits, Rubens painted his most glorious canvases. The Saint Ignatius who stands blessing the multitude and healing the infirm is no timid little professor, but a hero with the flame of life in his heart. One who has seen the "Madonna with the Saints" in Antwerp will understand clearly that the ecclesiastics who ordered such a picture also thought of the Church's victory over the world in terms of noble

spiritual imperialism—that they still cherished a notion of the *populus Dei* as a multitude destined to better things than Nirvana. After all, what did Rubens' pictures say excepting those words which a Jesuit mystic had inscribed on a leaf of his book of meditations, "The Creator . . . has wedded a soul divinely beautiful to a divinely beautiful body"? He himself, having all that uprightness, ethical health and spiritual confidence which Ruskin praised so highly in the masters of older art, drew meat and wine from the commissary of the Church. It was, of course, not a question of learning art from religion. The manner in which art sums up and interprets the world is not derivative, is not a thing which can be dictated from without or even from above. That is why, for instance, every sound philosophy—classical, mediaeval, modern—has insisted that art and morality are quite separate things. But when there is room in the Church for the artist, when, in other words, the universe which he expresses is also the universe of his faith, it is inevitable that every stroke of his brush or every line of his verse will incarnate something of the virtue of the religious society to which he belongs.

I think it obvious that the Catholic humanistic renaissance of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was going towards a point of rest at which the separate industries and endeavors of men would each find and keep their own sacredness. The hope was

for a kind of human world in which the stone-cutter would not perish with regret that he could not redeem humanity or be St. Anthony of the Desert, but would sense the spiritual importance of precisely what he did and of precisely what he was. That infinite restlessness which obsesses men because their ideal of what they should be like is never the same as that which they necessarily are—the restlessness of women not content with the bustling grandeur of motherhood, of men who are the innumerable, perennial Doktor Fausts of business, science, labor and religion—was courageously attacked by the Catholic revival, not indeed because it hoped for paradise on earth (though it was actively concerned with justice and charity), but because the rightness of its perspective was guaranteed by another world, unchanging and all good.

Nevertheless the whole endeavor failed, for reasons difficult even to enumerate. The culture it espoused was, of course, neo-classical and therefore did not fuse with the new nationalistic cultures of northern Europe. England in particular, grown puritanical, anti-Catholic and politically powerful, held aloof and could not be won over. Moreover, existing concepts of government did not harmonize with the spiritual and cultural ideal. We have seen something in a previous chapter of efforts made by the Jesuits themselves to correct absolutistic tendencies in government, and to encourage a political

democracy that would reinvigorate the roots of good government which mediaeval theory had planted. They could not succeed in either France or Spain; and it is curious enough that their words seem to have been heeded most diligently in England. In other words, the dominant groups of laymen—as well as a large share of the established clergy—were not ignited by the Jesuit kindling. This itself lost much of its first ardor after the death of Acquaviva, the great General, and the using-up of its energies in the foreign mission field.

Yet the Jesuits had instilled life into so much of the Catholic world that it is likely enough even the military and political groups might ultimately have been won over, had it not been for the flood of negation that swept so much of what had been accomplished aside. Puritanism was a form, and by reason of certain historical conditions a widely diffused form, of that accounting of its affairs to which mankind periodically returns. What is the one necessary human transaction? Ought not everything else to be sacrificed to this? Should not men who seemingly attach more importance to the symbol than to the truth, to time than to eternity, be compelled (forcibly or otherwise) for their own good to realize that this life is only a mortgage that must inevitably be paid off? Nor was Puritanism either a wholly Protestant thing or an altogether evil thing. It was, we may say, one of those seasons of aridity which

keep the human climate from becoming too soft and tropical; and as such it was given a place inside the Catholic renaissance itself.

There, however, it was merely a season and not the whole year. Consequently those who wanted no other kind of spiritual weather indulged in bitter criticism which, though it owed very little to John Calvin, arrived at nearly the same humanistic conclusions. A revival of Roman Stoicism as a Christian ethical philosophy took root in the Flemish schools and universities of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. From there it spread to France, winning the assent of many and ending in a view of the world called "Jansenism"—a defeatist philosophy and a negative theology which influenced thousands who repudiated it in principle. We need say nothing regarding it here excepting that it gained the support of Blaise Pascal, perhaps the greatest genius of the age. Pascal assailed the Jesuits violently as "worldlings" in a series of letters so brilliant and bewildering that the core of Ignatian enthusiasm received something like a mortal wound. Then, having made a remarkable personal mystical experience almost the sole criterion of religious truth, he mapped out a road to be taken by a new, severe imitation of Christ—a lofty and singularly pure road, but one which no saint has trod.

After Pascal, aridity set in everywhere. Even Bossuet, the illustrious bishop who during the years of

his prime had so eloquently proclaimed the synthesis of all things in Christ, lost his confidence in the ultimate outcome. Respected by contemporary France as a "doctor of the Church," having in England such disciples as John Dryden, he surrendered little by little to timidity and conservatism until he had ended by condemning all the new efforts in philosophy, the theatre, art, literature, and finally even the quite innocuous Boileau. "It was a great mistake," says Victor Giraud correctly, "and the consequences were almost immediately perceptible." Mankind did not come to a dead halt because the Church refused to move; and the subsequent modern story of revolutions and extravagances, of humanistic deism and doctrinal agnosticism, inevitably followed. We may concede that the Jesuits and those who worked with them made mistakes and sometimes lacked genius. I imagine it is quite possible to say as much about Napoleon. Perhaps it is more pertinent, however, to believe that the failure was due to inability to assimilate lay talent. Nobody paid sufficient attention to the circumstance that education and leadership were no longer the exclusive property of the clerical group—that, in a measure, the intense specialization demanded by the new humanism was making it practically impossible for an individual to be both an authoritative theologian according to the model drawn up by the Council of Trent and an authoritative something else.

However that may be, the next modern Catholic revival was, comparatively speaking, almost entirely the work of laymen. The nineteenth-century romantics who felt their way back into the spirit of the Church, who praised its beauty and partook of its magnificent abundance, were nearly all non-clerical. Here and there an exception—Montalembert, Newman, Rosmini, Hansjakob—may be noted, but only by way of proving the rule. The genuine, world-changing forces were those unloosed by a hundred geniuses knowing no community amongst themselves. Sometimes even they issued from men who gave only a half-hearted assent, or perhaps none, to the visible authority of the Church. At all events, Chateaubriand and Manzoni, Joseph de Maistre and Le Play, Brentano and Eichendorff, Miekiewicz and the Schlegels, more recently Dostoievski and Francis Thompson—these and their host of peers were the lay geniuses whom the seventeenth century had lacked. No one can estimate the full significance of the change they effected in the mind of man, and of the scope of the new orientation towards history which characterizes contemporary thought as a result of their intuitions and labors.

But no enthusiastic committee of welcome within the Church itself took up their work and carried it abroad triumphantly. Something of that same coolness which the Oxford Movement met with at the hands of established English Catholics prevailed al-

most everywhere, sometimes even casting a blight over promising young gardens of the soul. The Jesuits—weary, certainly, of too much strife—had by this time suffered their own saints to dwindle into anemic effigies; and when we thought of Ignatius Loyola, he seemed to us a kind of pietistic Horace Mann. An educator—perhaps even a normal-school graduate! A hundred varieties of "traditionalism" and mere obscurantism busied themselves chiefly with gunning for their enemies. And so, though the work of the romantics was unmistakably important, though the possibilities it suggested were grandiose, it sipped the poison of separatism and loneliness, and finally passed on to heirs who sat gibbering idiotically beside their favorite ruins. Then the "mystics" listened soulfully to symphony concerts, and the followers of the schools were busy getting out textbooks, one drearier and duller than the other. It was the age of Wagner, Oscar Wilde, and (incidentally) of indigestible catechisms!

In the world that had to be made over everywhere in Europe—the world that would come to be with the rising of the proletariat—the energy released by the Catholic romantics was of such little importance as to be practically negligible. Indeed, one may be specific and say that it was just as big and no bigger than a certain lyric by Clemens Brentano, which many a German workingman still knows by memory. Of course Catholics of a different stamp

did discern the trend of events and accomplished what they could. But in the midst of hemming and hawing, distinctions and definitions, timid advances and hasty retreats, nobody got farther than some little private oasis in the desert. It was not until the war had taken every one of us by the scruff of the neck, not until Pope Pius X—he of the lucid and simple grandeur—lay dying, that the Catholic conception of the world returned to Catholics. *Poveri figlii,* he said with his last breath; and a new vision of the brotherhood of all men and of all children of men rose from his broken heart.

IV

One may draw whatever conclusions one likes from the narrative I have tried to sketch. Personally I feel that history affords a reason for believing that the future Catholic cultural revival—portents and indications of which are now manifest in so many places and in peculiarly varied ways—will be an enterprise in which clergy and laymen frankly join hands. This does not mean, of course, that we shall see little Miss Utleys and big Billy Sundays in the pulpits, or that there will be any marked change in ecclesiastical organization. There are flighty people who yearn for such things, but they matter very little. The essential point is a different one entirely. That area in the higher life of man-

kind which has been homesteaded for generations by laymen must be incorporated in the city of the Church. Less of an apologist than he is now, more of a "swimmer in his native element" than he is now, the layman will manifest a spirituality which (to borrow the language of philosophy) is less logical and more ontological. The manifold varieties of speculation, the arts, sciences, literary crafts, social leadership—forces which distil public opinion that makes the world into its product—must somehow be protected and irrigated by the energies of Christendom.

This task is certainly not child's play. Nothing is to be gained by affixing labels and driving down stakes. To issue catalogues, for instance, of people baptized into the Church who have done some kind of writing or discovering may be a rather unctuous pastime but it manifestly settles nothing. We should have to know whether the sap of Christendom really rose in these people, making them free and humble, or whether they had been fed from some alien source. Nor is there any great point in accumulated property, however well administered. Property is baggage, and in times of stress poor devils and devils who are not poor covet it with a tenacity about which history tells us not a little. By comparison one may be perfectly sure that achievement motivated by the Catholic spirit, however remote from ecclesiastical organization or apologetic purpose it

may seem to be, will have a normal place in the religious synthesis quite in the same way as the varied deeds and purposes of a magnanimous man merge naturally in the round whole of his personality.

Who does not see, for example, that the only really convincing arguments to prove that there is no real conflict between religion and modern science are not those set forth in more or less journalistic books by people who are themselves only relatively scientific, but rather those preeminent scientists whose lives were ruled by a consciousness of spiritual realities? The welcome extended by the Catholic Church to honest history, philosophic inquiry, artistic creation, social reform and kindred matters is after all not something which can be incorporated into an abstract statement. Active participation in all these by men great enough to realize that the Church is sufficiently vast and free to make room for all these *as they are* is the only way both of getting things done and of living up to the example given by a long and illustrious tradition. Whenever Catholics become leaders in every department of cultural activity, culture will follow them. Not otherwise.

Obviously this declaration expresses no personal view of mine. It was upheld in the domain of scholarship, for instance, by Cardinal Desiré Mercier, of whom Joseph Bédier said at the recent fifth centenary of the University of Louvain: "Having accepted as his mission 'to prove that virtual harmony

exists between the Catholic faith and the conclusions established by science,' the Cardinal welcomed all the sincere efforts of reason and did not fear to run the risks such a welcome necessarily incurred. He knew well that wherever there is no personal investigation and willingness to discover the new, science has not even begun to exist, and that the man of science should bring to the task of verifying an hypothesis a prudence comparable with nothing except the courage which he expended upon the work of forming that hypothesis. Therefore Cardinal Mercier loved to say over and over again that 'the first condition of fruitful research is liberty.' 'It is necessary,' he declared, 'to foster science for its own sake, without seeking to promote any apologetic purpose.' He advised his students to entertain 'respect for scientific truth, from whatever source it may come, and whatever it may be'; and almost every year he began his course in psychology with a lecture in which his text was this aphorism of Herbert Spencer: 'In every error there is a soul of truth.' "

Admittedly it is difficult to live up to such an ideal, regardless of whether or not one clings to other ideals. Among Americans generally there exists a marked tendency to go in for "causes"—which are frequently nothing except vague generalizations which gain a following precisely because they are prepossessions. Nevertheless the Catholic Church

has so constantly manifested its respect for honesty and the "golden mean" that one rightly regards loyalty to it as being corrective of extravagances. Certainly one may be permitted to believe that if the Church in this country actually committed itself, in a vital and active way, to that intelligent realism which is the quality of its official philosophy, it would render the nation as a whole much estimable cultural service. Some detailed reasons why this belief seems pertinent and justifiable may now profitably be considered.

CHAPTER SIX

THE LITERARY ROTARY

I

THE word "Rotarian" has become, quite incorrectly, I suppose, a label with which dissatisfied intelligence in the United States brands the standardized products of the majority. It stands for primitive minds in sleek bodies; for the omnipresent mouthful of windy pretense that is handed round at gold-plated luncheons; for the sly humility which makes it a point to "meet the men who count":—in short, for all those surface phenomena so genuinely symptomatic of a great American disease of soul. This malady may, perhaps, be diagnosed most accurately by throwing patriotic caution to the winds and coming out with the bald fact that we are not a modern people. We have not lived through a community experience which in almost every other country as highly developed as ours has radically refashioned the human world—the rise of the working proletariat. This experience or upheaval is not at all the same thing as a revolution. It is rather the common determina-

tion of those who find themselves dispossessed by the processes of modern industrialism to find *as a class* ideas and standards more appropriate and actual than the ideology of a dominant commercial minority which, for a multitude of reasons, has made the earth bitter for millions of the poor. In it a gnarled and masculine dissatisfaction has moved and created an intellectual and artistic current so strong that ultimately all sections of mankind have been awakened, invigorated, and driven back to the virtue "honesty" which is the source of all culture. This is why Russia has had, though they were not sufficient to save her from madness, a Tolstoi and a Dostoievski; Poland a Zeromski and a Reymont; Germany a Hauptmann and a Franz Herwig; England a Shaw and a Hardy.

There are two good reasons why the United States witnessed no such upheaval. First, its population has been too seriously divided by racial and linguistic barriers ever to permit actual emotional or intellectual solidarity. Second, it happens to have produced no proletariat. Economic conditions continue to permit nomadic habits, changes of station, prosperity. Many of us have seen whole groups of laborers who brought Socialistic convictions with them via steerage, cast these away for a contented confidence in the status quo. A gleam of opportunity beckons us all forward, upward; and our management of industry has been too far-sighted as well as

too generous to extinguish this gleam entirely. As a result nine-tenths of what might be termed general cultural effort in the United States has been diverted to a peculiar kind of mass-education—training calculated to raise the recipient out of the drudgery of manual labor to the comparative dignity of the white collar. The recording angel alone knows how many people have been outfitted by four years of secondary schooling to become indigent and conscientious clerks. As a matter of fact, the glorious uplifting has now progressed so far that the income of a reputable carpenter makes the average college graduate green with envy.

Thus people like Upton Sinclair really have something like a case when they speak of "capitalistic influences" in American education. Only one must bear in mind that this "influence" comes not from a few persons with bulging money-bags, but from the whole of that population which frankly wants education to make it "capitalistic." The fact that a few unconventional professors here and there have been forced out of a job merely proves the point more fully. When all is said and done we are not as yet anything nearly like so "capitalistic" a people as the Germans and the English—that is, the wide distribution of property amongst us makes economic independence far more common than is the case in Germany and England. And still the pressure of public opinion there is such that regardless of the hue

of one's opinions regarding wealth, one may attain to a relatively permanent hood and chair. Here the people which goes to school simply does not care to jeopardize its opportunities—the whole safety of things as they are—by imbibing doctrines which are not a business or a social asset. I remember from my own educational experience a burly football star whom an earnest professor of politics had tried during four terms to impress with the necessity of ethics in public life. Shortly after his graduation, he said to me quite confidentially that he wanted to go into politics—but could not quite make up his mind whether being a Republican was not a "better bet" than being a Democrat. It was only for ironical reasons that I reminded him of a previous life-long devotion to Democracy! He has since triumphantly become a justice of the peace.

Well, whatever may be said for the comfortableness and placidity of such an arrangement, it is obviously not calculated to promote either profound thought or aesthetic devotedness. One may, therefore, note two highly interesting results of a generation of extensive education, approaching the matter now from a strictly cultural point of view. First, the business of the mind has been conducted almost exclusively by those whose traditions were not those of the newly educated masses—by the sons and daughters of old American families, in the blood of whom lives on that passion for the "in-

tangible realities" which no environment can eradicate, or by those who brought that passion with them from abroad. Let us note in passing that the Jewish people may justly be honored for the singular resoluteness with which members of their race have not permitted the worst possible immigrant conditions to dissuade them from a hungry devotion to ideas and visions which, though one may sometimes frankly disavow their content, are fine proofs of a living intellectual confidence. To know such Jews a little better might well be an invigorating experience for Catholics; and perhaps it would do thousands of flawless Protestants even more good.

The second result noticeable is the extremely small amount of spiritual substance that has been extracted from industrial life. Even today the small-town or rural origin of United States leaders of every description is so striking as almost to be taken for granted. For more than fifty years we have been tending as a people towards acceptance of the big city as a norm of living and even of thinking; but not one single book, and hardly even a single picture, has expressed that phenomenon with anything like the same vigor as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* or even Hamlin Garland's *Main Traveled Roads* dealt with manifestations of rural life. Yet our contemporary letters are full of nothing so much as the metropolis. While the writers of the Continent—notably France, Spain and Germany—visualize the countryside as

the Arcady in which recuperation from the ills of city may be hoped for, everybody in the United States has been damning the country and hurrahing for the big town. It is not as if there were much to hurrah about: at least, I have searched in vain for a writer who will make me feel it is good to be in New York as Charles Lamb makes me feel it is good to be in London. The point seems to be that all our intellectuals hate the country so much that out of sheer spite they are flocking to the city—and success.

Success, under present conditions, can be gauged only in terms of the mass, of the city crowd which reads, looks at pictures, and attends the theatre. Because that crowd has really no emotional or intellectual life of its own, being governed by the standards of the group to which it aspires, applause is normally a frightfully second-hand thing. It can, as we shall see, be cooked up. Indeed, in the final analysis it needs to be cooked up. That is why the subject-matter must prevailingly be either very raw, crude experience, or no experience at all. Mr. Van Wyck Brooks has hit upon an American "doctrine that the function of art is to turn aside the problems of life from the current of emotional experience and create in its audience a condition of cheerfulness that is not organically derived from experience but added from the outside." But practice has shown the existence of another concurrent doctrine. You can triumph-

antly dish up experience provided you cut it from near enough the loins to make it generally palatable. The discovery of this doctrine has been tremendously exciting and even profitable. In fact, it has lately been possible to associate the thing with "art"—for the benefit of all those who do not know that the experience of which artistic emotion and knowledge is born cannot be concentrated into any one portion of the anatomy.

Such circumstances obviously tempt even the most conscientious artists to sell out or to turn their energies to something like the automobile industry (where certain striking evidences of creative skill may be discerned). But possibly—it is best to conserve at least a portion of the great virtue of optimism—better days are ahead. I have been thinking over a certain melancholy line in Euripides, which translated literally means, "There is no justice in the eyes of men." The old dramatist seems to refer not to the virtue which is pictured with a pair of scales, but to simple straightness and precision of eyesight. He was a Sophist, and inclined to deny on principle that men could really be positive about anything. But perhaps he was also pointing out the inability of his time to display that quality of honesty, of frankness in the face of reality, which we ought to mean when we speak of intelligence. There is no use priding oneself on ability to see if one has formed a habit of

not looking at anything. There is no sense in intelligence which does not gauge the value of every single one of the senses.

No one doubts the normal American "justness of vision" where commercial values are concerned. Therefore "justness of vision" exists. It exists, I believe, even in that highly intuitive form which we term "creative"—for after all this word is relative, meaning not an ability to say presto and look at the product, but power to see something august and profoundly human growing in places not visible to the average naked eye. Culture must, therefore, hope for some kind of transfer of creative sight or insight from the realm of business, not merely in so far as a few master spirits are concerned but also in a wide receptive and experiencing public, to which the artist and thinker can give back what he finds there. Mr. Eric Gill, the English artist, has said very well that the sculptor or painter can do excellent work only when he is told what to do, what ideas to express. Certainly no genius has ever made the stuff and the form too—modern devotedness to absolute originality to the contrary notwithstanding.

But how is this transfer to be accomplished? People who have gotten over being naïve no longer look for the answer in mass education. Though our schools have promoted scholarship with a great deal of energy, though they have stimulated a number of talented young people and are certainly commend-

able as centers of intellectual activity, the descent of the crowd has reduced them to a state of indescribable chaos. Gone are the days when one could look to such youthful seats of learning as the University of Minnesota with hopeful enthusiasm. The courses in commerce, the manifest impotence in philosophy, are not so much causes as signs one is unable to miss seeing. But before we speculate intently about the matter, it may be well to consider a few of the substitute transfer-methods now being recommended, with a view of determining if the abundant supply of "Sweet Adeline" is in any danger of diminishing.

II

In modern Europe, as has been said, cultural history has consisted of the ascent to expression of a great crowd. This was immediately interested in establishing a usable code of values, and cannot altogether be blamed if it took (often most mistakenly) those which best corresponded with its experience and aspiration. Julius Bab, the German critic than whom no more lucid, comprehensive mind is now active, has described the manner in which his country assimilated the major doctrines of Nietzsche. However violent and occasionally insane these may have been, they had a tremendous offensive value. They struck hard at inertia—at settling back comfortably to enjoy the spoils of the past, without stopping to

realize that enjoyment is an art that requires long and careful preparation; at failure to realize that no human being can contentedly accept the legislation of a "slave morality" without ceasing to be human, and that hypocritical pretense to intelligence and insight cannot withstand an honest test any more than a toy balloon can resist a determined boy armed with a pin. Nietzsche was something like a stern policeman arousing thousands of moral and intellectual Rip Van Winkles asleep in a park. But what made him effective was the fact that a great, hungry crowd stood round cheering him and ready to come to his assistance.

For various reasons, some historical and others born of the genuine needs of the situation, these heavy-handed methods were neatly overhauled and then imported into the United States. Something has already been said regarding the influence of Germany upon our educational system and certain of our official professions of principle. But there is no doubt that two busy appraisers of our culture, Mr. Huneker and Mr. Mencken, earnestly reckoned with the need for a better system of cultural values. In both cases, the point of departure seems to have been great confidence in the powers of criticism, and great disgust with the existing critics. These were, indeed, often men blinded by the delusion that literature is a kind of exercise in penmanship, the chief purpose of which is to provide agreeable congeries of

highly orthodox contours. They were, in the famous phrase of Ambrose Bierce, "Nothing if not accurate, and they were not accurate." It must be set down to the credit of Mencken and Huneker that they often managed to do a thing then quite unusual in America: —to pick out a live book that had somehow squirmed through the press and to get people interested in it. Possessing critical tact and clearness of eyesight, they occasionally astonished us by finding a human being under a pile of literary drapery.

Mr. Mencken was, however, by no means content with rendering this service. It was, after all, well known that Nietzsche had not spent the whole of his days cackling over some golden egg in book form. It seemed desirable to try drumming the golden egg principle into people's heads, and even to breed a flock of hens able to supply the product. But a great Menckenian misfortune appeared in the fact that no vast social uprising, no ferment of the populace, lay at hand ready to supply the vitality needed for the enterprise. The only group which could be rallied to the cause was a professedly comfortable and intellectual one, which smiled kindly upon Nietzscheisms sometimes because they formulated genuine kinetic values, and sometimes because they were explosive and made a noise. With such a following clattering at his heels and cheering every sortie he made, Mencken could not avoid—and indeed there is no reason for supposing he tried to avoid—falling in

with the universal movement of all things toward the city. He himself became the movement's most impassioned spokesman. The air suddenly rang with terms like "yokel" and "rustic," applied with derision to that part of the world which still believed with Ben Franklin that virtue came from getting into bed and out of it early. Mencken, it is true, remained non-committal regarding sundry pleasures which Huneker had enthusiastically accepted as endorsements of urban Bohemia. Nietzsche had not been an exponent of the serenade—had, indeed, remained wholly aloof from the serenade.

The essentially bottomless character of the Menckenian adventuring has long since been obvious. Not only did it remain, in company with the vast bulk of contemporary American intelligence, unsupported by anything truly like a social movement in approximately the same direction, but it kept the intellect itself in a state of fermentation. While demanding a national language and literature, it kept on contending there was no nation. The Menckenian movement in American letters may, therefore, not unfairly be compared to the Communist movement in modern society. Neither is interested in normal, democratic processes of growth, neither is willing to concede that a slow, leisurely formation of the popular spirit promises best the production of solid, ripe fruit. A very noticeable sophistication clings also to both—a sense of having looked through the syllogisms upon

which the thinking of the great majority reposes, of having got the answer long before the rest of the class had even started to reckon, which attracts the fealty of impatient souls. We have noticed previously that in essence the Mencken mind is likewise a form of marked class consciousness. It is the spiritual state of Protestants who have discarded Protestantism; of Puritans who are nauseated with their Puritanism; of Americans who have arrived at the tragic knowledge that they are better than America. We can now proceed to see something of the party manifestos.

The first was more or less ready to hand. It consisted of the ponderous and very uncomfortable novels of Theodore Dreiser, in which a test deeply appreciated by Mr. Mencken had been applied to American society. This may be described as the "survival of the fittest emotion" theory. Into a society which normally smoothed out its emotional bosom front with eminently Bostonian temperateness (or, if you will, puritanical hypocrisy) Mr. Dreiser projected mortals with a furious passion for giving their very elemental feelings plenty of fodder. They are men who desire wealth or carnality tremendously, who overcome all opposition by reason of sheer bullheadedness and physical force, and who are not broken by their defeats. In them is exemplified what we are expected to accept as a cosmic fact—that the only emotions which are really kinetic, which effect displacement, are the rudimentary natural instincts

which such religions as Calvinism exist to extinguish. You may not admire them, indeed you are probably not expected to admire them, but if you are sensible you will concede that they are the motor impulses of humanity and that attempts to slow them down simply threaten the existence of human movement.

Of course the Dreiser theory and its elaborations have a kind of mastodonic vigor admirable enough in its way. But one does not have to compare it with the tempered steel of an intellect like that of Henri Bergson to realize its crudity. It is sufficient to set it beside even the massive accumulations of Zola to see what a pyramid is here toppling upon a minute point in reason and experience. I am not interested in analyzing the matter, which anybody who cares to do so may accomplish for himself, but will pass on to another and much more popular Menckenian manifesto. If the test applied by Dreiser was one of emotion, Sinclair Lewis' rule of thumb became what may be termed the "obsession of routine" theory. No man has said so much about the reasons why the American world was rushing city-ward, and certainly no one has said it so grotesquely. The show begins by projecting into our society a number of straight lines, down which human automatons proceed with a kind of terrifying powerlessness to take a step to the right or left. Next the lines are denominated "Main Street," "Rotary Club," "Protestant Pulpit," and are deftly ornamented with a vast amount of scenery

selected with great skill from the American landscape. Finally, individuals are introduced who have no desire to walk down the straight lines—who are too complex, too rich, too creative to patronize anything excepting a Chestertonian road to Roundabout.

Grant the accuracy of the projection, and Sinclair Lewis becomes, of course, the most illuminating commentator on our national sociology. I do not grant it but will refrain from pressing the point. Two more immediately important questions arise: What is the artistic experience from the blissful heights of which the Lewis criticism is made? Precisely what and where is the road which the crowd should take? In answering the first question it is helpful to bear in mind that Lewis openly and heartily expressed his indebtedness to Mencken, and that Mencken replied by conferring upon Lewis the emblem of favorite disciple. This entente cordiale once more takes us back to Nietzsche, and to the really frightening fact that *here the delight is not in any manifestation of experience, but rather and really in the fact that there is an absence of experience.* So far as I can see, the source of ecstasy is in the nihilistic belief that the world has dried up. To the second question something like an answer might be made by adducing various Socialistic utterances, trite raptures in the presence of art, and a number of psalms to scientific endeavor which are sprinkled through the Lewis

books. But if this be the answer, one might well prefer living humbly in the dessicated shadow of Elmer Gantry's pulpit to immersing oneself in such a pool of muddy dishwater cast off after various absurd and antiquated dinners of "enlightenment."

You may legitimately feel that American smugness and tepidity deserve a good drubbing; you may rejoice at being a ring-side spectator, and not mind the crowd you are with. But I wonder if anybody or anything is really being pummelled. I wonder if the best of our contemporary youthful intelligence is not merely wasting its strength punching a dummy. God knows, for instance, that hundreds of our hamlets are miserable holes, where people have been dead so long that they are offensive to the nostrils. He is also, no doubt, aware that paradise has not moved back to Broadway. These millions of little metropolitan human cages, hemmed in by the spectre of rent and of that day, constantly moving nearer and nearer, when the pay-cheque will dwindle or cease, are obviously not to be recommended as ample gardens in which the spirit can promenade. And finally, when everything has been said and done, any powerful social food,—and art is surely that,—is not a product to be eaten by the producers themselves, regardless of the unworthiness of others to partake. The Menckenian adventure is, however, an attempt to develop superiority out of a sense of superiority. If it be the bridge across which the transfer of energy

from "business" is to be effected, then it is so for reasons not discernible at present.

This conclusion can be fortified if one observes the flourishing of another Nietzschean maxim, which is probably borrowed from the philosopher by mistake and is not dear to Mencken. I refer to the maxim of Nordic racial superiority. Vigorously as this has been pummelled by those to whom it seems absurd, it is nevertheless a theory projected into American society by a powerful group bent upon establishing its sense of superiority. As early as 1900 we began to hear much about the threat of immigration to the purity and goodness of American blood. A Senate Committee went so far as to request opinions from authorities in anthropology as to the probable racial consequences of unrestricted immigration and received, for the most part, scientific statements calculated to prove the absurdity of the scare. But it takes an uncommonly strong dose of science to lay an old-fashioned scare. During the war and immediately after it, we got in quick succession the works of Madison Grant, Lathrop Stoddard and their more or less professorial imitators. The burden of their story was nearly always the same old song. Greatness in history was declared to have been perennially the greatness of race—the Nordic race. If, therefore, the United States are to remain and become great, they must foster the Nordic, that is the Anglo-Saxon, race.

The people to whom this was good news swallowed it with a gusto that is still reflected in the smacking of lips when the subject of ancestry is mentioned in several varieties of American society. What matter if authoritative anthropologists struggled hard to get a hearing for truth? The flimsy foundations of the Grant-Stoddard theory are evident, but may be gauged from one assertion. In order to make a case for the Anglo-Saxonia, Grant was obliged to take account of its Elbe River origins. This meant that if his view of the race was correct, the goodly Anglo-Saxon of his narrative was really about the same thing as an Angle or a Saxon. In view of what was happening in the war and of the tales of atrocity which had been designed to make Christian hair stand on end, this identification promised to be calamitous. Who would concede "Nordic" superiority, if that consisted in cutting off noses and blinding little children? Therefore Grant "found" the German people guilty of having been made "Alpine" during the course of the Thirty Years' War. This sanguinary conflict, he announced, had killed off the Teutonic upper classes and the nobility, leaving the "Alpine" farm population dominant though, of course, it was natively inferior. Now no information was actually available to show that the upper classes and the nobility had really managed to remain "Nordic." History has, however, long since declared over and over again that it was precisely the German

farm population which suffered extinction during the Thirty Years' War! This matter of record, which those of us who profited by a chance to study history were required to memorize during high-school years, had simply not been taken into account by Mr. Grant.

Such a delusion, though important for reasons of its own, is mentioned here because of the parallel it establishes with the idea of intellectual superiority which characterizes Mencken less than his entourage. In both cases the value of the nation is seen to lie with a small group, accession to which is *a priori* impossible to the great majority of citizens. A person who happens to be born without any "Nordic" characteristics is hopelessly out of luck trying to acquire any. The fiat expressed at the time of his birth will remain in force far beyond the time when his great-grandchildren prepare to make their appearance. Similarly, it is quite impossible to avoid being a "yokel" in the Menckenian sense unless you happen to be a certain kind of person. You must grow into emancipation out of Protestantism, you must will to be a superman, and above all you must find your joy in life going about applying a definite number of tests to the rest of mankind.

Granted that in so far as literature is concerned, we have all profited by the frequent justice of the Menckenian judgment; admitted that as a chronicler of current conventional stupidities and hypocrisies

the *American Mercury* has character and value—the fact remains that, like everything else of its kind in the history of culture, this whole movement has died of inanition on its own mountain. It can startle Boston by coming to grips with the police regarding a salacious tale, but it cannot and will not arrest the world with the beautiful spectacle of an artist transfiguring human experience. It cannot and will not, because it has elected to separate from life, to flit about the arid happy-hunting-grounds of Tom Paine's *Age of Reason.* The sterility of the whole enterprise is, indeed, symbolized by the sterility of the men themselves. It involves the slow cremation of intellectuals having neither wives, children, homes nor dreams of immortality. It has become the karma of men who set out to cherish themselves, and who therefore will never be cherished. We may fear, admire, emulate, oppose, listen attentively to them; but we shall never give them any love.

III

One should not be so earnestly concerned with the Menckenian movement, despite its fateful attraction for genuine young talents like those of F. Scott Fitzgerald and John Dos Passos, were it not that it has a real representative importance. While the institutions which might conceivably weld American society into an advancing group are inert and seem-

ingly helpless, while Menckenism prides itself upon being self-conscious, a varied assortment of agencies work and thrive on the assumption that the canaille, the crowd, is a sponge with infinite powers of indiscriminate absorption. Give something a label and (so the theory goes) the mob will accept it. Call another thing divine, and they will make their obeisance before it. Indeed the only way to rise above it is to be one of it yourself—to like the entertainment it likes, to swim with the strokes it has learned, and win out in the race for the pier. "Give the public what it wants," and judge that by what you want yourself. Such is the theory of a fatty, prosperous pandering which combs the earth for morsels—at a price.

This people of ours, having a genuine energy and a certain lingering nobility, generous and easily aroused, fabulously wealthy and yet so reckless with its savings, is not a Roman rabble which cunning ought to misguide. Nevertheless it is tragically derouted, abominably shamed, by forces it cannot create, which it must rely upon to appear of their own strength and do it service. Reading Dr. James T. Allen's *Stage Antiquities,* one finds the following description of Roman mimes: "The performers, dressed in amusing costumes, carried on a dialogue in speech and song full of coarsest jokes and accompanied by grimaces and lascivious gestures and unrestrained horseplay, while a chorus of dancers, both

male and female, followed the action with appropriate songs and movements to the music of the pipe. The gross buffooneries and obscene suggestiveness of the farces suited the degraded taste of the times and gave them a power over the multitude which the more refined drama had not known even in the best days of the Republic. Their sensual appeal was enhanced by the presence of the female actors and dancers (mimae), women of low character and shameless audacity, who wantonly displayed their beauty to the gaze of the applauding crowds."

One need not sigh for these good old days. The only thing we now miss is the "music of the pipe," the rest of the program being provided with a generosity which renders the success of "refined drama" almost impossible, and abetted by a coalition of critics whose remarks about anything more elevated than yodelling are painfully immature. A professional theatregoer vouches for the fact that a certain well-known "commentator on the drama" attended four New York premières in a row and was not intoxicated to the point of near-insensibility on only one of the nights in question—the night which served a new red-hot musical comedy concoction. There is, of course, no reason for rushing to invoke the aid of Jeremy Collier. Only the inexperienced will ever believe that simple, workaday folk can be interested in lofty mystical plays, highly amused by sophisticated repartee, or even genuinely thrilled by

Shakespeare. From time immemorial they have yearned for bread and circuses, and they will insist upon having at least the circuses to the end. But it is a mark of civilization to see that the bread is made of honest grain, and that the circuses are something more than tedious orgies. Some day we shall probably be forced to confess that, by comparison with the more dapper gentlemen of the contemporary show-business, Mr. Barnum was not merely a very shrewd Yankee, but also a saintly benefactor of mankind.

There is no end of the tale of perverted popular tastes. Anybody who has seen peasants come in from the un-uplifted villages in which they live to show their children the loveliness of Florentine gateways and campaniles, may well wonder why the children of those children in the new world are stripped so absolutely bare of discernment. If your vender of vegetables or washing-machines happens to remark that he has read *Lord Jim* for the third time and found it very satisfying, you may wager a last lonely dollar that he has not dwelt in this land more than ten years. Once as an exceedingly struggling reporter I rented a room in a Chicago flat. The host was a trim young clerk whose nights were an undeviating routine of playing "Oh Johnnie" on the phonograph, reading the picture section of the town's worst newspaper, and proceeding with his wife to the movie. Sometime later, his father, a German barber, came to

live with him. He brought a splendid little library of Teutonic literature, and incidentally he brought some respectable records—which he was never permitted to play until the family had gone out. Everybody meets with experiences of the same sort. They are typical in a thousand places and in as many walks of life. If these people really wish to dry up their souls and extract their brains, well and good. A human being dead-set on degenerating can, probably, not be interfered with. But it so happens that we have been building and staffing schools, instituting churches, giving orations and fighting wars to keep them from degenerating. And it may be that there is question not so much of their will as of the soil and the climate in which they have been set out to grow.

This flabby decay in turn has created a state of affairs in which even the most enthusiastic leadership finds itself without followers. Every army knows what happens when the will of the troops is directed towards an objective different from that envisaged by the officers. It means defeat and retreat all along the line. And with an army or society which has turned rabble and given up the rules of the game, it is possible to do everything that springs from the opposite of morale. There is a literature which is very much like looting; there is a scientific jargon which intimately resembles lawlessness; there is even a form of pulpit oratory the chaos of which is reminiscent of pandemonium. What else, for example,

is the abandonment of linguistic care—the frank unconcern with style, which is perennially an index to character—but indifference to one's uniform and carriage, a weariness which gives up bearing arms? And certainly these scores of books which dish up neurasthenia and the jabbering of semi-official harlots, what are they but evidences of the break-down of literary and intellectual discipline? It is one thing to reveal the sins and limn the fate of man; it is another to crow over a privately constructed dung-heap with one's eye on a pseudo-scientific score.

When one contrasts the honesty—using this word consistently in the sense we have attributed to Euripides—of American science, scholarship and industrial endeavor with what prevails in the world of popular creative arts, of popular culture as such, one sees that Van Wyck Brooks is profoundly right when he says, "We have none of the unity which gives life, no; but we have almost succumbed to the uniformity that destroys it." Uniformity—but no uniform. Not merely the unvarying, sickening sameness of the new houses in Brooklyn, of the slag-heaps in Gary, of the omnipresent railroad-station, postoffice and gothic spire. Not merely the monotony of all but resolute newspaperdom, fostered by the steady consolidation of journals of opinion into syndicates having no opinion. But also and unfortunately the increasing monotony of professional intelligence which speaks to the public through books, pictures,

plays, lectures. A monotony deliberately fostered by those whose claim it is to have infinite variety and openness of mind. A monotony based on the suggestive value of advertising, which Don Knowlton calls the "overwhelming imperative." A monotony, finally, of which, in the realm of higher letters, we have recently been given a most pertinent illustration.

Instructed no doubt by the multitudinous triumphs of huckstering, which have established the reign of one kind of raisin, stocking and facial expression, the more illustrious "exponents of contemporary civilization" have recently volunteered to decide for the advanced public what it shall read and what ideas it shall grapple to its soul. Experiments were performed to determine the best method of approach. Prize novel contests (the idea of which was borrowed from the so much yearned-for Parisian boulevards, where—however—the purpose uniformly has been to rescue some promising author from the poorhouse); skilfully directed propaganda for some new form of verse or prose; plans which guaranteed the receipt, by parcel post and stout string, of the "book of the month" or the "book of the week": these and other delicate barometric devices indicated the approach to ourselves of a downpour of brand-new culture. Beyond that one found in clear view and large type intriguing lists of the "best magazine articles of the week," records of such masterpieces as

had sold widely, and brief catalogues of the "most significant current topics." It began to look as if, as a result of accepting the advice so courteously and laboriously supplied, one might hope to sing an intellectual Excelsior with some abandon. Estimate, if you can, the self-sacrifice of those who read through current magazine literature and mark the "best" with a neat cross in red crayon! Nevertheless there was a relative amount of incoherence in all this activity. The committee of governors was still diversified, and occasionally it seemed that their recommendations were minus a synthetic quality.

At present, however, this deficiency has been triumphantly remedied. A saving unification of bookish advice came riding along majestically one day on "Wings," swam like a swan-like carrier-pigeon overhead, and promised that to all who were willing to listen to reason it would despatch wisdom, at regular intervals, for a trifling cash consideration. Though vouched for by a compact group of intellectuals, all of whom have given evidence of a definitely up-to-date cast of mind, the new salvation was perched preeminently upon the shoulders of Professor Carl Van Doren, Columbia University lecturer, critic of American letters, and an agnostic whose wit was often whetted by morsels of theology and appreciated by highly intellectual audiences. One supposes that Dr. Van Doren was deeply moved in the days of his youth by Upton Sinclair's dream of an "American

University of Literature," which, administered by the most eminent literary sages of the epoch and promoted by a corps of trained stylistic detectives, would pounce upon manuscripts with a view of finding "not what the public wants, but what American Literature wants, and what God wants, and what beauty and truth and righteousness want. "A somewhat ambitious program, no doubt. Mr. Sinclair himself is said to have realized its comparatively mastodonic proportions. But at any rate Dr. Van Doren is now the illustrious president of this "American University of Literature," his faculty is gathered fraternally round about him, and with the probable exception of "what God wants" the program is in force.

The processes of operation are varied and most interesting. When it was learned that Edwin Arlington Robinson, a good and from the University's point of view also a commendable poet, had completed a lengthy rimed work dealing with the subject of Tristram, an intellectual promotion dinner was at once held in New York City, and there our good President arose and uttered words to the effect that he rejoiced at the thought that a masterpiece, a work of the rarest poetic inspiration, was being launched into the world. The effect was what an old-fashioned adjective describes as magical—so magical, indeed, that the publishers were quite taken by surprise and failed to get out a second edition in time. Literally

thousands of readers were driven to help discover the masterpiece—to revel in the light from which the bushel had been carefully removed so that all men might be dazzled. It was, to be sure, a generous and commendable performance, though all anyone really got was a tepid Wagnerian debauch in Arthurian legend, by comparison with which Mr. Robinson's poorest early lyrics are marvels of suggestiveness and form. We need not belabor the point.

It is rather inside the charmed circle of seers, on the "University" campus, as it were, that the greatest activity is expended. Our President does, it is true, officiate at such functions as the award of the Harper Fiction Prize, but on the whole he remains at home and concentrates on the business of the firm. The difficulties involved in selecting from myriads of hopefully submitted manuscripts those few which are really calculated to stop the progress of the sun and to incorporate the purposes of the institution, are naturally greater than the uninitiated will imagine. Mrs. Countryclub, who receives illumination regularly in a tidy parcel, little realizes through what darknesses and abysses her guide and mentor has had to struggle. But she accepts thankfully, the more so because every shipment bears the unmistakable trademark in which she places whole-hearted confidence —the trademark of a confident disillusionment, a sublimated naturalism, an intelligence sterilized by the scientific method. That some such experiment

will prosper, despite the angry and utterly extraneous protests of other businesses engaged in the sale of literature, no one can doubt. There is even some reason to believe that people need literary counsel and are grateful for it. But it is nevertheless faintly distressing to behold with what blissful ease Professor Van Doren has sought and will hold the office of Grand Exalted Literary Adviser to forty-million of such eager and trusting souls!

Careful contemplation of this significant instance will reveal the fact that a transfer of energy from the kinetic to the literary field has been accomplished, even if it is of an entirely different sort than had been so earnestly desired. The "American University of Literature" is only an isolated phenomenon. We really have a Literary Rotary, inside which all aspirants to that intelligence which directly influences the public are expected to find seats and cheer for the official slogans. And they do, with gusto and alacrity. A whole code of pass-words, set speeches and even favorite melodies has been agreed upon. The members "boost" each other with that enlightened self-interest which is a sign of sophistication, and their creed is always in their hip-pockets. And it is, let us admit, a stirring, an audacious creed. In accepting it one swears fidelity to current assumptions of diverse carefully selected graduate schools, and refers the universe to the psychoanalyst or the "behavioristic impulse" whenever opportunity pre-

sents itself. The chief aversion being all that is "puritanical," and the darling of all hearts what is "refreshingly powerful and alive," one's judgment is supplied with a grimy black and a pellucid white which can be applied to individual instances with so much ease that every bright boy who has mastered the technique and read Anatole France can set up as a critic. Small wonder that the reviewer's pay-cheque is the world's greatest living survival of Grub Street!

There is, it is true, a measure of truth in all these rotarian principles, just as there is much to be said for the ideals of fellowship and service proposed by the popular and despised commercial organizations. We cannot forget that the business of selling books has grown difficult; that nearly three-fourths of the number actually purchased go to people living in and around New York City; that cooperation of a legitimate sort is as good for authors as it is for farmers; and that the concentration of book-making in one large city necessarily depends for stability and advancement upon finding an echo of some sort in the populace of that city. What is regrettable about existing literary Rotarianism is the fact that its principles are not honestly held. We have, for example, no single master of psychoanalysis in this country, although there are some few physicians who have tried earnestly to study and practice it. None of these few is prepared to make extravagant claims for the value, the method or the application

of the practice. And yet every other novelist, biographer or critic is quite willing to deal psychoanalytically with subjects of whom he has no more than a fanciful or flitting knowledge, or even with subjects whom the most rhapsodical associate of Freud would not dream of subjecting to psychoanalysis. Without caring to venture a sweeping statement, one may say that a good half of the Literary Rotary's essays in philosophy, science or religion are the work of men who have the same habits of careful deliberation and examination as those of an imaginary bushman who might discuss the Talmud.

First-rate work is being done in the United States, no one will deny. It is a little difficult to discern, but it exists. I believe that in the days of his youth Mr. Mencken rendered pioneer service in discovering literary virtue, which we might otherwise have missed seeing. Yet there is a sign of the epoch in the fact that his criticism, quite apart from the babble of people who have fastened themselves like leeches to his coat-tails, is no longer perspicacious and revealing, but is tied futilely to the output of a firm the standardized products of which are inescapable reminders of Horace's pathetic mouse. Yes, you can see with the naked eye the steady, appalling senescence of many a younger man who joined the firm hopefully. It is in the cramp of mind which has settled upon the critical promise of Joseph Wood Krutch; in the paralysis of Scott Fitzgerald; and in

the cheap soap-box sociology of Sinclair Lewis. The rising intelligentsia still run to the factory when the whistle blows, like a flock of urchins following a steam calliope . . . but people who really count, like Willa Sibert Cather and Lizette Reese, have gone their own way, alone.

Round about us there roars the uncivilized "literary" jargon of boys too lazy to work at a job, or of men fashioned by a starved and inhuman environment. Having not the slightest connection either with experience or creative art, this immense holocaust of words is a chorus which hums round the thrones of contemporary popularistic American intellectual thrones, bowing and offering incense after the fashion of serfs, starving for the ecstatic pleasure of getting a nod of recognition from the favorite Grand Mogul. Smart, sophisticated, breezy, emancipated it is, thinking of the Old World—the self-erected home of the European man—in terms of the rawest and most cosmopolitan of new boulevards, an everlasting parvenu blushing with guilt at the thought of humble American origins, just as the woman made wealthy through selling butter tries to hide all indications of the churn with a lorgnette.

IV

To these standardizations of American intelligence the Catholic pulse in the United States, it seems to

me, cannot remain indifferent. Indeed, though they are not so frequently spoken of as are the standardizations of civic, racial or educational consciousness, they are considerably more important. You can smile at the pretense of social caste, you can pull down the blind when the Klan marches by. But unless you are determined to be a hermit, you cannot be inattentive to the way in which the community performs its most essential tasks. If the life of the intellect were a static, inactive thing, you might crowd a series of maxims and arguments into some little book, distribute that, and confidently await results. But we can, after two thousand years of Christian experience, propose no such definition of the mind of man. And when one has sensed the complete aloofness of contemporary standardizations from everything that was or will be a Christian concept of culture, when one knows, moreover, that those who might have been the proponents of such a concept are themselves stamped from head to heel by the symbols of these standardizations, one realizes how futile and extravagant contented immobility is.

It is not, for example, primarily a question of morals, though it is that too. A man may be, as Chateaubriand undoubtedly was, very wobbly on his ethical feet and yet be a deeply religious soul living in the spirit of Catholic culture. Less than ever is anything to be gained by a series of inhibitions. No human being ever yet grew strong on a regimen of

inactivity, and in the moral and mental world exercise, effort, is even more necessary than in the physical world. Yet what opportunities are provided for young and alert Catholics in this country to grow strong in action? Seven or eight official cinder-paths have been laid out and guaranteed to be absolutely safe. One may become a starveling teacher—and feel oneself slipping down, down into that tremendous gulch which has swallowed up whole crowds of mighty men and women. One may write neat argumentative defenses of the Church, provided one is careful to look up what has already been said and so avoid all evidence of individuality. One may even write pious little lyrics and get, as a reward, half a page in somebody's ever so unctuous anthology. Does any one expect that active minds will ever be satisfied with prancing up and down such confines? To expect that is to have taken opium oneself and ordered the world to go hang.

But after all one thinks of the matter rather as something of national import. If the whole domain of culture is to be considered a mere by-product of a society which expends its best energies on other tasks, then, perhaps, it will make little difference whether or not literature and the accompanying crafts are genuinely related to the country's experience and aspiration. But if we are to think of this cultivation and harvesting of the spirit as one of the major things we should or shall accomplish, then it

is incumbent upon us to see that the standards by which it is regulated are such as, quite apart from the dreams cherished by particular groups, deserve the respect and confidence of us all. Obviously this is not attainable through legislative or other ipse dixits. We can merely hope that it will be produced by those forces active in our society which have done most, and can in theory at least be relied upon to do most, for the national well-being.

Now it seems to me undeniable that Christianity, whether Catholic or Protestant, is the only spiritual attitude which has ever been acclimated in the United States. Regardless of the excrescences, the hopelessly crude perversions and the glaring omissions with which it may be charged or even found guilty, it is the recipe which the vast majority of people have followed in their efforts to do good and beautiful things. And whenever that recipe has been disregarded or abandoned, the demons of evil have romped hand in hand with the demons of ugliness down our streets, across our landscape. Nor is this historical Christian vitality peculiar to this country. It was not a Christian apologist but Hippolyte Taine, the skeptic, who said of Christianity: "Always and everywhere, for eighteen hundred years, wherever those wings fail or are broken, public and private morals are degraded. In Italy during the Renaissance, in England under the Restoration, in France under the National Convention, man seemed as

pagan as in the first century; he became at once as he was in the times of Augustus and Tiberias, voluptuous and hard-hearted; he misused others and himself; brutal or calculating egoism regained ascendancy, cruelty and sensuality were openly paraded, and society became the abode of ruffians and the haunt of evil." Or listen to this from another skeptic, Paul Valéry: "Christianity proposes the subtlest, the most important, and even the most fertile problems to the mind. . . . It has stimulated and educated millions of minds, has made them act and react during a chain of centuries." Finally, this in a slightly different vein from the most eminent of living historians of art, Emile Mâle: "A people which despises law does not know how to produce the beautiful. Art worthy of its name has a law which correspond in a mysterious way with morality. That which we term "justice" becomes "equilibrium" in the language of art."

Regardless of the differences which exist and will continue to exist between them, Catholics and Protestants in America are alike in that they can never accept, while life remains in them, a form of culture antagonistic to their instincts and principles. They cannot believe, if they wish to guarantee to this country at least a relative communal existence in the spirit of Christ, that an intelligence which poses as its ultimate metaphysical principle the goodness of life, the rightness of thinking, outside

the communion of Christ and inside a circle of contemptuous sophisticates, is in any manner representative of them or acceptable to them. They will not, if they are wise, make the matter an issue of government, proposing any form of censorship or legislative action. But they must try to develop an influence of their own, to make artistic and scholarly activity possible in their own atmosphere, and to create within their people that vitality which is the secret of expression.

But what shall be done? Personally I think it will be a long time before Protestantism recovers the intellectual confidence which it possessed during the best and most liberal portion of its history. There is no sign that it is about to receive another Leibnitz or even another Francis Asbury. Nor is there anything to indicate that during years to come there will be more than humble beginnings of a Catholic American Renaissance. But in both camps there is much afoot that is good and is clearly entitled to respect. Certainly a fine awareness of the contemporary situation exists among Episcopalians, and certainly Catholics, having such artists as C. Maginnis and Barry Byrne, such critics as Agnes Repplier, and such poets as Father O'Donnell and Sister Madeleva, have a right to feel that they are not wholly submerged.

It is, perhaps, in the field of sound scholarship of all kinds that the greatest opportunity for contact lies. Although the universities have not succeeded in

carrying through the impossible task of mass education, they have conducted investigation and research under the guidance of standards approached by nothing else in contemporary civilization. Here, at least, one finds the twin ideals of honesty and charitableness—or rigorous regard for truth and willingness to place it at the service of mankind—which Christianity took over from the ethics of antiquity and refined. Nor has this devoted enterprise of scholarship been confined entirely to academic circles. Cherished by many who took part in it for a time under academic auspices and then went out to other careers, emulated and reverenced by others having scarcely any scholastic experience, it has here and there transformed lives and given society the benefit of serious study courageously performed. Frankly, one thinks that the supreme achievements of the intellect in our time are not to be found in the realm of creative literature or art, but in such things as the political philosophy of Walter Lippmann, so conscientious and reasonable, the discovery of American history by Claude Bowers, the mediaeval researches of Professor Charles Haskins, and the literary syntheses of Hervey Allen and Mary Phillips, students of Poe. Certainly this list, which is by no means a catalogue, cannot be matched for quality by anything which the Literary Rotary has selected to receive the stamp of its approval, or which has been brought forth by its laboring mountain.

Oddly enough, it is precisely this world of scholarship, so akin to their principles in many respects and so courteous to them in others, that religious leaders in the United States often attack and fear. Though Columbia University, for instance, is certainly not an institution for the promotion of orthodoxy, it has furnished us with the only dependable studies of modern Catholic social movements available thus far—the one being a survey of the work in France by Parker Moon, the other an examination of what has been accomplished in England by Georgiana McEntee. Similarly it is men at Yale and Princeton—non-Catholics, too—who have restored to life the figure of Saint Ignatius, who have carried on the study of Christian art with fervor and understanding, and who have begun to build up in certain newer intellectual circles a better understanding of traditional wisdom and morals. One is fallible and yet one thinks these doors are more attractive to knock at than the heterogeneous entrances to the movies and politics, to traveling men's clubs and Fourth of July committees, which have recently taken on an air of relative orthodoxy by dint of much knocking.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TOMORROW

I

"TO tell the good that may happen is more agreeable than to predict the evil that will happen," a mournful oriental sage declared long ago. The present chapter is designed to be agreeable. It will attempt to sketch briefly certain major forms of relationship between the Catholic body and the United States, which may conceivably grow out of present circumstances. Preliminary to all of these is, of course, the assumption that political conflict of every sort between the Church and its neighbors will remain as unknown as it has been in the past. Frankly I do not see how there can be any clash so long as our present form of constitutional government abides. But that there should be oppositions and contrasts in other departments of social activity is inevitable and quite salutary. Individualism is a concept of man which Christianity itself introduced into the world and fostered. As soon as one postulates personal immortality and belief in a personal God, one is forced to conclude

that each and every human being has not only a separate identity but also his or her own characteristics, bent of mind and destiny. Absolute harmony between men can be hoped for only by reasoning from a monotonous metaphysical ultimate—either a pantheistic origin and destiny, or a series of mechanistic "laws" which operate rigorously and allow no exception.

Taking one's point of departure from this individualism which has always been and will always necessarily remain a fundamental philosophic tenet of Christianity, it is not impossible to discern what must be the normal Christian attitude towards problems created by the existence of society. The vast and perennially baffling question as to where the "State" came from may be dismissed here. What really matters, after all, is what we normally take the "State" to be in our own time, and whether this assumption squares with our attitude toward life and the world as a whole. Now it is a curious fact, noted and analyzed by Hilaire Belloc, that the sponsors of absolute capitalism and of Marxian Socialism both agree that social government is a kind of cosmic formula—something quite like the sun—which must be regarded as the dictatorial nucleus of all human activity. Both consider the function of economic production the central purpose of mankind, and argue that all else must be subjected to it by the "State." Each bases its appeal upon efficiency—that is, upon the right working out of laws from which there is

no possible escape—and upon the statistics of disaster following upon inefficiency.

Well, many have contended that a Catholic, or any integral Christian for that matter, is not restrained from accepting and promoting either of these economic theses, so long as they are not bound up with additional philosophic or pseudo-religious assertions. This seems to me quite untenable. The Church is a society which accepts all men on a basis of equality, under a very special dispensation of authority. A layman must, it is true, bow to the rulings of a hieratic group, at least in so far as his outward actions are concerned; but this group must also accept those same rulings, together with many more imposed upon it by reason of its status. The Pope, for instance, must be "obedient" in very many ways of which the ordinary Christian never hears anything. On the other hand, it is apparent from the very fact that the two opposed doctrines of capitalism and socialism exist that the same economic law is being regarded from two contrasted standpoints, each of which involves the experience and the aspirations of a separate class. Historically as well as theoretically, there is no compromise possible between the two points of vantage. The socialist has always yearned to trounce the capitalist, and the capitalist has pursued the "Red" with a vengeance wherever that was possible. In other words, Christian authority is derived from the "consent of the governed"

to accept legislation decreed, it is believed, by God, while the authority of the capitalistic or socialistic state reposes upon a specific group grip upon "economic law."

It has been argued with some show of reason that the origin of this great modern industrial dualism is to be sought in the rift of Christian unity which occurred during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Today even the theory that Protestantism is responsible for the industrial revolution will no longer hold water. Indeed, what we have come to know of the beginnings of modern capitalism in Italy and South Germany during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries might even justify the opinion that Protestantism was the *result* of new industrial and national developments which Christendom either did not know how to manage or failed to manage in the right way. Perhaps a careful study of that eruptive period will finally enable us to see clearly that although the economic dualism which is so clearly established in our own time, because of what has happened during several centuries, is not directly connected with any religious principle, it tends in practice to determine men's attitudes towards religion and to cause disruptions in religious society. Today there are many who have abandoned Christianity because they fancied it "capitalistic" in essence; on the other hand, there are those who profess to despise Christianity because they term it a "slave religion."

Again, the mere fact that both these attitudes exist goes a long way toward proving both wrong. If one reputable witness describes a person as being white, while an equally reputable witness reports black, the chances are that the individual is of an intermediate hue. And throughout history the churches have, indeed, sought to reconcile the interests and preferences of those who have and those who have not. In times when spiritual authority meant a great deal more than it does now, the definition of a given course of conduct as "just" went far towards effecting a remedy of some wrong that bore down heavily upon the poor. During certain other periods the desire for social stability may have led churchmen to adopt a little more frankly than was commendable the point of view of the possessing class. At present, however, the situation is somewhat more complicated. First of all, it is only during the past few years that we have succeeded in getting beyond very crude first impressions of industrialism and in arriving at a relatively satisfactory set of definitions. Secondly, though the Catholic Church (as also many of the Protestant bodies) has emphatically proclaimed certain principles of justice, it is not clear how these can be applied to the concrete situation, and it is unfortunately true that the mandates of ecclesiastical authority make very little actual impression.

One hears many persons express extreme dissatis-

faction with the "indifference" of the Church to the enterprise of social reform. But really, what can the Church do? She has been compelled to surrender her position as counselor to the civil government, and is now quite without the means to do more than launch unasked for advice into the world. In practice this advice has also been bound up with the enunciation of a theory of government which comparatively few people understand, and which is certainly not being carried out in contemporary political affairs. The doctrine that the power vested in the state "is of God," that the primary purpose of government is the protection of natural rights, and that actions contrary to the law of God or destructive of natural rights are illegitimate, certainly seems the soundest and sanest of all teachings regarding the matter. Unfortunately we never think of it when the business of the state comes to mind. For us of the present, government is the sway of public opinion exercised through individuals selected by that opinion and bound to abide by a written code of law and legal precedent. Our perennial political question, therefore, is not primarily if the rule of the state be right or wrong, but if the state is carrying on its business as public opinion desires.

It seems obvious, as a consequence, that the social task of the Church, which is committed to uphold principles of justice and charity, must be to influence public opinion in favor of doing the right instead of

the wrong thing. No doubt this is extremely difficult, for two reasons: first, the discernment of right depends upon a mastery of standards—a knowledge of the principles according to which the good or evil of a particular situation may be estimated—which the public does not possess; secondly, the conduct of government is now in practice so remote and abstracted from the things in which common opinion is interested that it has become extremely difficult to affiliate the two. Notice, for example, the situation in Porto Rico. No sooner had the United States gained control of the island, than it started out magnanimously upon a program of universal education. Little natives who previously had grown up in the humble hope of some day owning a potato patch and a sunny little cabin were corralled into schools and educated to the point where the potato patch was out of question. As a result, a number of United States industries have since been besieged by ambitious little persons in great numbers, longing to tie New York or Chicago parcels at the princely salary of twelve dollars a week. On paper we have done great things. . . . But the Porto Rican is paying the price.

In a certain sense (eliminating now all discussion of subsidiary political philosophy) the Soviet idea of government, as well as the *podenta* aspect of Fascismo, indicate a progressive forward step toward better government by public opinion. They give to

the individual a greater share in the control of circumstances that immediately concern him, while lessening his preoccupation with affairs over which his authority can at most be very indefinite. Though we cherish the power to vote for a president (some of us, at least, do cherish it), it is really very slight because we know extremely little either about the men presented as candidates or about the problems with which the executive chosen will have to deal. Suppose, on the other hand, that we as members of a clearly defined local social group helped to regulate matters of vital concern to ourselves as a group because they were economic rather than merely political in character. Suppose that this group got in touch with similar groups throughout the country and agreed that certain measures were required to promote the general welfare. Opposition might be encountered, but so long as all groups remained conscious of their just rights and of the rights of others, a reasonable measure of success would be guaranteed under the government of the United States.

Today it is actually possible to discern two such amalgamations of groups in this country—the corporative interests and the labor organizations. To a constantly increasing extent, both have abandoned the idea of using the "state" as a means to promote their purposes and ambitions. If we except the very important matter of the tariff, which in theory at least is considered a benefit to all citizens, productive

capital expects nothing of government beyond a certain amount of corrective and restrictive action. Organized labor, on the other hand, has frankly indicated a desire to battle for its ends as a union of men which is in no sense a political party. This seems to be a commendable step in the direction of better government by public opinion, even though the emphasis laid upon the state is considerably less. It needs, however, a considerable amount of direction according to principle—that is, direction which the Church as the custodian of moral truth is in duty bound to offer.

Now, as we have seen, dominant Catholic opinion on social problems has generally been committed to the belief that the "state" as such is the remedy for the evils of industrial life. It is instructive to note that Bishop von Ketteler, the great German social leader, began with an idea of developing a system of self-managed Christian cooperatives and ended with an appeal to the state for definite remedial laws. In this country the remarkable powers of Dr. John A. Ryan have been devoted to the advocacy of much the same laws—a minimum wage being the most important. I hazard the belief that the reason why all this hard and excellent work has largely failed to arouse even good Catholics is primarily because the trend of the time is against it. Perhaps we shall see, in the future, a number of priests—or even a new religious order—who frankly identify them-

selves with the cause of labor as a group, strengthening the common will to secure rights and tempering the explosive impatience of those for whom the normal democratic processes of improvement are too slow.

Certainly in such a course of action men as lucid and masculine of soul as Dr. Ryan would meet with more success than can be expected in the nearly hopeless labor of getting people not directly interested in the problem to weigh and urge abstract principles of government and justice. Similarly we may come to know representatives of the Church who frankly gain an intimate knowledge of corporative business, who grasp the problems created by modern organization and competition, and who use their influence to promote a deep respect for human rights and ethics. Through such an "immediate application" of moral power, the Church might conceivably do very much to help build up a sound and solid social structure on the middle ground between the capitalistic and the socialistic "states." Frankly, I for one cannot feel that anything very important is to be hoped for from the attempt to unite all Catholics in the United States behind a single given program of economic reform. By comparison the decision of the Rev. Eugene O'Hara and his associates to go over definitely to the farmer and accept his point of view is a beacon on the horizon, although it is fed by far less oil than it ought to receive.

II

The humanizing of a great industrialized population is as big a job as the attainment of industrial justice. Here again modern circumstances have introduced baffling complexities. In the first place, agencies relied upon with a kind of blind faith have displayed results far less regal than what had been anticipated. We had hoped that a knowledge of how to read and write would in some mysterious way enlarge the intelligence of the average citizen. Instead the major profit seems to be that which has flowed into the cashboxes of the spectacle trade. Plain as day also is the tremendous financial success —constantly increasing at that—of "organs of opinion," the pictures in which cater to prejudice and instinct, the text of which inculcates everything that education was instituted to drive out of society, and the primary function of which is to force to the wall, through a process of consolidation, the papers and periodicals which once served a discriminating public. Similarly, we had expected that extension of the franchise would imply a more intense civic consciousness, a greater generosity on behalf of the common welfare. We now find that large sections of the population do not care enough for the vote to use it, while other sections sell theirs for so little that one fancies them unacquainted with the high cost of living.

In the second place, the country districts—farms and small towns—are nearly as "industrial" as the cities themselves. Their prosperity is determined by markets beyond their control; their habits are acquired, not traditional; and the system of training which they are counseled to evaluate so highly draws the sap of youth from their bones. Everywhere, in short, a reckless attempt to reckon everything in terms of "economic law" has meant so great a disregard for human values that these have well-nigh been submerged. And with human values religion also tends to disappear. Indeed, though there is something poetic in many forms of the socialistic movement, and though the luxuries upon which accumulated wealth can be expended are occasionally brought into the periphery of the arts, the recession of beauty and the humanities generally out of the lives of modern men is almost exactly proportionate to the abandonment of every kind of vigorous religious truth. What this means can, perhaps, be inferred from an analogy. It has long since been evident that the mechanics of printing are now so highly developed that there is practically no limit to the number of good books which might be issued and distributed. Yet all this technical perfection does not guarantee the publication of a single good book. In fact, though worth-while volumes do make their appearance, the average of literary value is probably lower than it was in those cramped days when the

writers of Europe could be counted on the fingers. Similarly, one must feel that so long as the central qualitative urge—that is, the religious urge, which need not necessarily assume one dogmatic form—is not powerfully active in men, the other business of society will not get itself done with more than quantitative success.

On the other hand, it is imperative that wherever the religious impulse does subsist it should realize its creative function, knowing meanwhile that in so doing it is not concerned with mere extraneous matters but with a task thoroughly its own. We may well believe that when this impulse is genuinely alert in society it will ask and attempt to answer the same questions which society is attempting to ask and answer. How do people live? What is done to see that their work absorbs rather than deadens intelligence, the distinctive characteristic of man? In what way do the places in which they labor represent stages in the general hoped-for upward development of humanity? Of course there are other questions, but these few have been asked so often and answered so gloomily that they may be considered as putting into interrogative form some of the basic social concerns of the era.

No doubt the "way" in which people live is largely determined by the character of the family fireside. A house is the most fundamental form of civilized private property. Until recently western men all in-

stinctively desired a small place to call their "own," into which the progress of domestic life could be incorporated as neatly as a picture is put into a frame. The rise of the great industrial city, however, rendered this desire incapable of realization. When a million or more citizens do their work inside a compact area, they find going great distances to and fro a real hardship. Various projects of decentralization to the contrary notwithstanding, the fact remains that as soon as a people accepts industry it also necessarily accepts the city. The only thing that can be done is to make the most of such opportunities as are afforded—a "most" that is certainly not being attempted today. The gamut from squalor to pretentious ugliness, from the crowded tenement to the three dainty rooms no child will ever invade, from the row of dilapidated brown-stone residences to the cheap monotony of the suburban development—this is a line of degradation, not of progress. Sometimes, walking about in a welter of impossible "apartments," one feels that the only people who are now being housed sanely are the insane, the trim quiet lawns about whose "homes" still suggest what a hearth should mean to every child of man.

Similarly, the skyscraper as such is obviously not a solution of contemporary architectural problems. It may be a solution, provided the tremendous aspiration of its structural form is genuinely the expression of something human—not necessarily a re-

ligious something, but at least a spiritual idea. No doubt certain of the tall buildings which have arisen (during moments when cheap craftsmanship did not guide the mapping out of floor-space for some getter of quick riches) do convey a new vision of beauty, a novel and potentially sound mastery of the problem of city residence. But we have not yet realized that this skyscraper crammed with office folk is, like the factory, the meeting-place of a community of men and women between whom there exists, at least, a solidarity of circumstance. The problem is to make that solidarity something more vital and significant —not to deplore it, and decidedly not to waste time regretting the skyscraper or the factory. After all, what many of us have seen of the famous "small tradesmen" of Europe leaves the impression that most of them labored during impossibly long hours in damp and crowded quarters which induced disease and ignorance. By comparison the skyscraper and the factory are hopeful projects, if as yet nothing more.

It is not difficult to see for the Church a more important place in this new scheme of things than it has, as yet, occupied. If we are going to be mediaeval, why not face the fact that the important thing was not the gothic eaves-spout but the cathedral? This was not merely a religious center, but a place round which all of life—including economics —pulsed strongly. It was not alone a matter of

bringing thousands of men together for the work of construction. The cathedral was also a place in the neighborhood of which business was transacted, as witness the purpose to which the open square before the church is today subjected in every old European town. Men did not think, in mediaeval days, of the church as a place near which one went on Sunday mornings, but as a common center round which life hummed and through which one would arrive at the larger, everlasting life. In our own time it is always a little harrowing to find an expensive basilica rising in the midst of a cluster of squalid industrial hovels, never managing to be more than the scene of a hurried and poorly understood liturgy, and so remote from the normal businesses of men that all are hushed when they come near it, as if it were not merely something sacred but also something very strange.

I believe it not unlikely that we shall witness, in some more active years to come, a closer identification of the space occupied by religion and labor. Already a Spanish company has planned to inclose within its New York office building a chapel where daily Mass will be celebrated, and where, therefore, the idea of nearness to God and to the ultimate necessary human enterprise will mingle with the purposes of toil a little more intimately than is now the case. One can dream of many groups of salaried people in giant skyscrapers, of workers in shops and fac-

tories, demanding in unison that there be somewhere in the "house" a little room where, as Mr. Chesterton has it, "God sits all the year." If armies have their tents given over to worship, if the rural village —where it still abides—has its central spire, why should not these varied city armies possess their little inner citadel, the minister in which mingles daily with those he serves, thus coming close to the model of "fisherman" which was set for him in the beginning? Similarly, one fancies builders of new structures doing their work more carefully and humanly because they sense that the aspiration of the form flung skyward will be not merely commercial but religious and everlasting as well. A dream all this is, possibly; and yet, surely, it is a little, feeble dream compared with those vast hopes which raised themselves in the heart of infant Christendom, crossing the darkest of all historical thresholds to the conquest of the world.

Similarly, it is not unlikely (certainly it is desirable) that the Church itself will come to feel that its proper attitude is not theoretic doctrine about the domestic "way" in which people live, but leadership that is also community action. Why should not houses of worship come to be built primarily as places of residence? Fancy a city in which there was a beautiful common central cathedral; a number of supplementary basilicas and churches, erected to honor saints or to afford an object to private benefi-

cence; and finally, numerous great apartment houses or residence hotels, in which a spacious chapel incorporated into the structure would serve as the common religious meeting-place of those dwelling under the same roof—at least of the Catholics dwelling there, for these houses might profitably be open to all. The idea may seem novel, but it is really only a transfer to the realm of family living of a custom which prevails in almost every convent and many "homes" for bachelors and aging people. One cannot doubt that such an arrangement would bring religion closer to actual life and that in turn it would make people more actual to the churches (for the problem is not a Catholic one merely) than is now altogether customary.

Finally also, if there be no escape from accepting the modern factory and commercial district as the hubs round which life revolves, it is apparent that here and nowhere else the knot must be tied which will link mankind with cultural sources. Just as religion has in some degree grown stiffened and static under mechanistic pressure, a form of life apart from all others, so certainly the varied arts and philosophies are all too closely walled inside museums and herbariums. How can ownership of masterpieces of painting and sculpture be really public if they are locked up in places to which the public seldom comes? In Chicago, for instance, it takes exactly one hour of difficult and tiring travel to come

in from Englewood to the magnificent structure on Michigan Avenue which houses so much finished artistic inspiration. If a man knows what this inspiration is worth, or like the queer creature that used to walk about the Louvre has decided to live and die with Mona Lisa, no difficulty will restrain him from constant pilgrimages. The ordinary citizen, however, does not know; and supposing that curiosity has brought him some one time into the museum, he will stare at the huddled canvases in amazement and go away satisfied that he has "got art" enough for a lifetime.

If we are really determined to make use of our accumulated wealth in beautiful creative handiwork, if we are also anxious to make our people love something better than mere instinct attaches it to, then we shall sometime or other learn a lesson from the Middle Ages and take what we have to the places where life is lived. I can conceive of factory-workers lingering for a while as they go home through a long, lighted corridor to gaze a little at Corregios and Sargents loaned for a space and hung as the majesty of their forms and colors deserves. I can imagine community chapels, of the kind described previously, decorated with borrowed Rubens or Maurice Denis transfigurations of religious hope. I can think of an endless succession of such expositions succeeding themselves in an endless number of factories and office buildings. Here, after all, are the men and

women in whose hearts a zest for the spell of beauty still lingers sufficiently strong to give them pleasure in gracious things owned in common rather than collected to adorn a sumptuous, successful winter home. Likewise, I recall the Cambridge man who used to talk about literature—Ruskin, Shakespeare, Conrad—to lumberjacks in Nova Scotia four times weekly during the season; and it seems that through some such university as this one might strike successfully at that tremendous, deadening, baffling vacuity that now stares out everywhere from the gloss of American civilization.

But if the factory is to go on being merely a factory, and the skyscraper merely a residence of clicking typewriters; if the real agencies of civilization are to keep to their retreats, satisfied that superiority unrecognized by any excepting themselves is ample justification for their being; if the solemn windbags and the salacious towncriers now on the job are to continue acting as the oracles of the populace:—then one can wager with absolute safety that from the spiritual point of view the America that is to be will have something of the agreeable aridity of a cannibal land. Or do people still believe in the fairy tale of a "leisured class?" It is difficult to conceive of such a class being more than a likeness of the lifeless, dusty things that now fill corridor after corridor of magnificent deserted galleries and libraries of the "world's best literature."

III

Literature . . . perhaps the most universal of modern forms of culture . . . indulged in, most of the intellectuals tell us, by masters released from the constraint of "formal discipline" . . . not compossible (to borrow a word from Leibnitz) with religion or, more specifically, with metaphysical truth . . . established by drumming up a fashionable claque, but created to begin with in one of the myriad moods of anarchy. Nevertheless it may be worth while trying to guess vaguely at what may some day be the relation between letters and religion, more specifically the Catholic religion, in the United States. Aware though one is that the contemporary Catholic revivals in France, Germany and Italy are deplored by critics who like "life" in great raw hunks, round which they can tiptoe ecstatically in their spectacles, the "guessing" alluded to above remains a harmless pastime in which we, the long since outmoded and the hopelessly provincial, may be permitted to indulge if it amuses us. The possibility remains, of course, that this pastime may really be a serious and absorbing man's job. What of it? Nothing would come of an attempt to compare Ludwig Lewisohn with Paul Claudel, or George Dorsey with Jacques Maritain. We should first have to find out who Claudel and Maritain are—a difficult and,

I am informed by eminently thoughtful editors among others, an uninteresting task.

Let it be pastime then, and let us begin with a story. There was once upon a time a young man, who has since grown older. His name is James Joyce, and he is the author of books which every young literary "aspirant" yearns first to read, then to possess and then to imitate. The imitations are, indeed, sufficiently numerous to justify one in believing that the Joyce volumes have enjoyed a wider sale than usually falls to the lot of a writer who goes in for pitiless analysis. What is the explanation? Simply Mr. Joyce's almost scholarly meticulousness in dumping his spiritual cargo overboard. Everything that years of Jesuit instruction, life in Ireland, constantly alert intelligence and deeply Catholic conscience could accumulate are heaped into a current that sweeps away all but the naked man—the cynical but shivering intellectual savage who exults in the sacrifice. It is an awful but a very interesting spectacle. One sees so much, and one's hair stands on end beside. Yet—and here is the important point—the only thing that rises when one contemplates the Joyce imitations is one's temper. So much stupid palaver about things which have been trite for centuries, which fall to pieces under examination as rotten silk tears in the hands of an inspector, is enough to make one turn to the tale of Simple Simon for the mere sake of excitement.

In other words, James Joyce had something to throw away—an earth, a cosmos, in which lines had been cut deep by old experience; a vision of heaven and hell, with man walking on the narrow ledge between; of milk-white saints and crimson criminals, wound together in the yarn of human life; of illustrious temptation which strengthens because it means bitter combat, of frenzied amours with ideals which blend in the unattainable radiance of sanctity; of a wide, vast Catholic world, wherein every furrow turned reveals a multitude of glistening reliquaries. Joyce scuttling his ship is a marvelous if harrowing and loathsome sight. But these American apings—no point is gained from naming them—are just ridiculous. Our gaudy pirates of themselves have nothing to cast into the stream, not even a respectable wardrobe. Setting out to burn up the world, they set fire to the class-room globe. Sins which go no deeper than notes struck on a tin piano; psychoanalysis as infantile as a two-year-old's contemplation of his buttons; a release from religion caused by a picture of the Neanderthal Man in a Sunday supplement; the ghastly unconventionality of getting drunk on Broadway (which, of course, has never been done before!)—all these are characteristics of the never-ending one-horse shows which clamber up and expect to be considered shocking.

Well, that is the story. And the moral? Just this—that before we can have even so quite unnecessary

a thing as a great erotic literature, we must have had some man-sized conception of life. And I submit that the dimensions of James Joyce are quite enough evidence, were there nothing else, that the Catholic world is a man's world. Doubtless there are other respectable continents, and I shall concede further that the Church cannot ever make an essentially little man big. These matters are, however, of no special significance. What *is* important is that the regime of absolving oneself from all cults or disciplines is simply calculated to keep one from growing up. There are a number of swimming sites, but nobody can swim sitting on a bank and waving his arms. We may agree that getting into the Catholic stream often means hard going, particularly for the creative temperament of an artist, which needs freedom and perishes without it. But what a sight an artist is who has never taken a plunge into anything! The moral is therefore very simple: if you must be a negative, illuminated, emancipated, "free" artist or thinker, then do what the great artists and thinkers of this category—Voltaire, Hugo, Anatole France, James Joyce—have done. Plunge into the waters of Catholic life, grow strong and rich, then come out and waste your strength and substance. How fortunate we are, after all, that our "eruptive genius" has delved, for the most part, in nothing more complex than the contemporary mind!

But since there are good reasons for being both

earnest and hopeful, it is well to consider the elementary positive aspects of the question. One may note, to begin with, that nothing is now more warmly discussed in critical circles than the relations between what are called classicism and romanticism. We have at length got over the habit of making either into a peg upon which to hang all we dislike in letters and thought, and have come to the place where we allow both to stand for definite spiritual or temperamental tendencies. The extreme classicist is the man who reduces the world which he encounters to some kind of abstractly conceived form; the romantic is he who sees how much that is concrete, immediate, will not go into the form. Both are here to stay and both are of importance because of a situation fundamental to all modern adventures in the realm of art.

If one surveys the differences between classic poetry, sculpture and painting and what has been done in the same arts since Christianity modified the outlook of mankind, one finds that the chief change has been a heightening, an intensification, of emotion. Greece made more beautiful statues than the *beau Christ* of Amiens or Rodin's *Thinker*, but it fashioned none in which so intense an expression of feeling is manifest. The frescos of Egypt are sublime, but passion surges nowhere in them as it does in even the transfigured affection of Raffael. There is brooding in antique portraiture, but it seems only a passing mood compared with the tremendous

concentration of Leonardo da Vinci or Peter Brueghel. Calamity and desire, finally, crowd the lines of Aeschylus; but how much of poise they keep when compared with the doom and the wrath of *Macbeth!* In the *Salve Regina* there is unprecedented ecstasy; in the *Dies Irae,* unparalleled woe. St. Francis did not worship the sun, but the language he employed in addressing it was more amorous than Zoroaster's. And when one reads the rapturous "mystical dialogues" of the saints, it almost seems as if language itself had participated in a magnificent surrender—a draining to the last drop—of the personality.

One may term this negligence of poise "romantic"; and yet as long as the arts remained truly Christian (no matter how secular their subject-matter), a definite sense of order—a "classic" norm—went hand in glove with the outpouring of emotion. An understanding of the ultimate relation between man and the world, the soul and God, supplied a corrective perspective. Consequently a poem like the *Stabat Mater,* heavy with pathos though it be, does not give us the impression that we have known "the bliss of tears." The shuddering plaintiveness of old ecclesiastical music is never just simply an "experience"; and though the gothic minster wears more ornament than any other kind of structure in the world, it does not seem overladen. Once this perspective was lost, however, the arts drifted into the inchoate. Music became finally nothing more than

enervating melody; the cathedral glittered with gaudy marbles, immense masses of inappropriate metal; and the "literature of emotion," written by a thousand modern romantic souls, was something like a great flood of feeling carrying one off from all reality.

As a consequence, spirits wise enough to demand that humanity preserve something of the intellect began to talk more and more insistently about order, which they sometimes called "form," "classic restraint," "*frein vital*." It is not strange that men who went the whole distance from a romantically conceived-of religion to an agnosticism created by scientific research—men like the philosopher Comte or his disciple, Charles Maurras—should have believed very earnestly that unless reason were saved by damming up the torrent of feeling, there would ultimately be nothing left but chaos. Unfortunately, though a man like Maurras does understand nobly the poise of antiquity, he is altogether incapable of working his way back into the creative mood of antiquity. Christianity—whatever one may think of its intrinsic value—enlarged the human world to such an extent that trying to return into the cosmos which antedated Christianity is like attempting to wear the shoes one felt comfortable in as a child. We have, it is true, not advanced much intellectually since the days of Greece. Oddly enough, the reason was the first human faculty to develop, just as the head is

the first part of the body to grow to full size. The historical expansion of emotion is, however, prodigious. We have come to know many new feelings and intuitions, and to incorporate them into our civilization. A person who kneels and prays to the Madonna has entered a large domain of emotion the existence of which classical ages did not suspect. One has only to compare Aristotle with Coventry Patmore on the one hand and with Paul Bourget on the other to realize to what stature the concept of eros has attained. This acquisition of emotion is, surely, maturity; but like all manifestations of full development, it conceals a fatal tendency towards old age.

When a thoroughly modern critic or aesthete speaks of "freedom," what he means is not primarily an untrammeled use of the intelligence (which after all would not and could not carry him very far off some beaten logical routine), but a restrainless liberty of feeling. He yearns for the debauch during which all the known sign-posts of the universe will blur, and weird fantastic centaurs will appear riding across a wavering line of hills. Witness the formless visions of modern German expressionism, in which there is often nothing else but dimensionless horror, passion or frenzy. Or observe how the chief exponent of this freedom in the United States, Ludwig Lewisohn, drifts constantly to the realms of neo-romanticism out of which Hugo von Hoffmansthal has come with an amorphous cargo. Now of course

we should have to go far into a consideration of aesthetics if we hoped to establish the truth that from the mere point of view of pure art this discard of restraint, this abandonment of order, is hopelessly wrong. A simple sentence and a crude analogy may, however, throw some light upon the matter. The sentence is this: the line of beauty is the curve, and not the untrammeled dissolution of the curve into the spiral. And here is the analogy: a well-formed human leg, of either sex, clad in close-fitting silk hose, is a sight in which one can discern all that mysterious symmetry which is the charm of sculpture and finished architecture. But suppose the hose slips, and a series of shoddy rivulets waver round the leg: —the symmetry has disappeared, an element of the innately slovenly and ridiculous has appeared, although a greater looseness or "freedom" has made its début.

One cannot easily doubt that the loss of perspective in the emotional world means artistic and humanistic weakness and incoherence. Nevertheless the conquests of emotion garnered during twenty centuries of Christian experience are too valuable to surrender, too beautiful to do without. Nietszche, allowance having been made for his bias, was profoundly right when he preferred Dionysius to Apollo. We simply cannot throw away our inherited selves and ride Pegasus bare-backed into some variety of antique "classicism." What, then, is the recipe, if, in-

deed, there be a recipe? I think it quite sensible that we should recall the fact that Christianity, by which our treasure of feeling was discovered and hoarded, also clung to a concept of order in everything to which it set its mind and hand. And so if those of us who are artists, thinkers, or merely members of the audience once more became profoundly Christian, we might keep sane order in our tropical emotional gardens and not be obliged, for health's sake, to hunt out the aridity of some mountain-peak.

What has been said appears to me a reasonable statement of the historical Catholic attitude, though it certainly needs much supplementary comment, but it is not an account of what is the actual Catholic attitude in the United States. We are now struggling and straining towards it; trying to get rid of inhibitions and misguided steps leading us nowhere; attempting to ascend to a more valuable visualization of the true freedom and significance of art. No doubt we are still far from success. It is as yet difficult for many people to realize that the creative spirit needs elbow-room and cannot be constrained into some posture, suggestive either of the apologist or the sign-painter. We have still vividly before our eyes the stupefying indifference of the populace, which decreed that Louise Imogen Guiney—bravest of poets —should know the tragic doom of want and isolation. But we have recently lost several whom the gods had marked for their own . . . and we ourselves are be-

ginning to learn the bitter but fruitful lesson of loneliness.

IV

Manifold as are the contacts which the coming age needs to establish between society and Christianity, they are scarcely more varied than the separations within Christianity itself. So clearly have thoughtful men discerned the weakness which is the outcome of sects in chaos and of gospels in disarray, that a yearning for "church unity" is now one of the most sincere among ecclesiastical emotions. Nevertheless there is no good in blinding oneself to the fact that the Catholic and Protestant religions have now run for so long a time in parallel channels that the likelihood of their confluence in the immediate future is not very great. I write here as a layman, without authority or ability to discuss matters of dogma or apologetic. Yet I feel that one may safely pray that somewhere in the distances ahead Christ has appointed a meeting of the waters, where currents that now babble angrily to one another will mingle in the strength and peace of one stream. And if it be legitimate to pray thus, out of confidence in ultimate divine charity, it may also well be excellent to observe towards one another courtesy and long-suffering.

Indeed, as a result of matters which are now his-

torical, the relationship between Catholics and Protestants has undergone great changes. One must have been in some measure a Catholic in order to be what is really conveyed by the term "Protestant." Today, however, members of the various communions which claim that adjective have lived so long apart from the Church of Rome that they have scarcely any understanding of what it is or what its burning problems happen to be. One is astonished to see how constantly their method of attack envisages things which have been moss-grown for centuries. Indeed, they sometimes praise things which to Catholics themselves are obstacles in the way of enthusiastic loyalty. The faithful, weary of listening to their pastor ask for money —for "a good soundless, green or yellow collection" —overhear some Presbyterian divine acclaiming the handling of Catholic finances. They then listen to his shocked exposure of "Romanist" practices of worshiping saints, yes even gaudy plaster-casts from some second-rate shop. Needless to say, they find both comments ridiculous.

The Catholic body, on the other hand, still frequently deals with Protestants as if nothing had happened since the seventeenth century began. It is surmised that some cogent treatise on the confessional will induce a veritable stampede of converts, or that a douche of satire applied to the familiar figure of Martin Luther will illuminate his spiritual offspring. As a matter of fact, all such expedients are nearly

as much the result of misconceptions as is the aforementioned Presbyterian exposure. Time has brought up the Protestant in one way, the Catholic in another. There are profound differences of attitude towards Scripture, liturgy, authority, religious practice, science, human history. The gulf between the intellectual influence of Aquinas on the one hand, of Kant and Hegel on the other, is in itself an abyss. Today the separation is not so much a matter of static points of doctrine as of diverse manners of spiritual living.

At all events, no one with a sense of how august the mystery of religion is will deny either that the grace of God has been active in both tendencies, or that this grace is something which we cannot judge or arbitrarily limit. Just as we are coming to realize, with the great saints, that the supreme miracles are those which Omnipotence works within the soul, so also we are understanding again that the affection of Our Father is endless—that all men need Him so much that He is good to them, regardless of what may be termed their status in the realm of the spirit. A great Catholic archbishop, perhaps the most scholarly prelate now living, is fond of saying that whereas the first age of Christianity was characterized by hope and the second by faith, the one in which we now carry must be distinguished for charity—charity which does not, indeed, condone error or wilful hardness, but which is never contentious or brutal and does not identify its own vision with the infinite

divine will. I have listened to the holiest priest I have known declare that the great harvest sickle of Christ is not the syllogism but prayer; and having desired to follow him from afar in many other things, I wish to be his disciple in this respect also.

Of course a living faith will avoid identifying tolerance with indifference. No Christian who understands the true origins and norms of his faith can agree to abandon anything essential in that faith, or fail to view as wholly deplorable such outlandish excresences as belief in the imminent return to earth of Mary Baker Eddy. Catholics, therefore, will frankly stand apart from Protestants. But they realize also that the day upon which Protestantism really dies in this country will be ominous, indeed. This death could only add further to the strength of that "enlightenment" which is so contagious all about us. Our danger now lies in the influence for cynicism wielded by a myriad deserters from the ranks of belief—deserters whose romantic haloes cater to the instinct for irreverence, carelessness and denial. If those who feel that much contemporary whacking away at the limitations of Protestantism is doing good are in earnest, let them consider whether they should prefer to place their children in the company of a man who devoutly professes the Christian creed, with whatever narrow anarchies, or in the company of illuminati who have long since tossed the Bible and

the Fathers into a handy waste-basket. Nor can one fail to remember that Protestantism is being assaulted in this country because it is still the "official" creed —just as the Catholic Church was besieged in eighteenth-century France because it was the "official" creed.

All these things having been voiced, one could sum up all that has been said in this book by declaring that though there is room for and even need of an intelligent, discerning normative definition of "American," there is absolutely no justification for excluding from that definition anything that is really Catholic. Indeed both past and present, theory and practice, demonstrate that without the riches of the Church our conception of nationhood would be poorer and meaner, in numberless ways. On the other hand, Catholics, grateful for the shelter spread over them by the republic, will continue to believe, with the assembled bishops of 1884, "that our country's heroes were the instruments of the God of Nations in establishing this home of freedom; to both the Almighty and to His instruments in the work, we look with grateful reverence; and to maintain the inheritance which they have left us, should it ever—which God forbid—be imperiled, our Catholic citizens will be found ready to stand forward, as one man, ready to pledge anew 'their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor.' "

V

At present, however, there exists one profound source of disagreement about which it seems profitable to say something in bringing these varied considerations to a close. The progress of the tremendous struggle now going on between the Church and the government in Mexico cannot be viewed with indifference by the United States. During more than twelve months all the manifestations of despicable tyranny—murder, torture, denial of the right of trial by jury, exile, confiscation of property, abolition of all means of protest, destruction of representative government, prohibition of all religious services and ministrations—have been arrayed in a manner so clear and abominable that in the opinion of the Church the "persecution of Calles" is without a parallel since the days of Nero and Diocletian. And yet, though the facts in the case have been reported by a series of wholly reliable newspapermen and government representatives, it is today impossible to get the major press of the country to make a statement of these facts. Indeed, a remarkable personal declaration on the matter by Pope Pius XI published in the *New York Times*, called forth not a single editorial comment in any secular American newspaper or periodical.

What is the reason for this extraordinary situation? One does not believe that the people of the

United States have grown indifferent to injustice and barbarism; one knows that they are not secretly rejoicing over the martyrdom of simple priests and people in a country which borders so closely upon theirs. During the early stages of the conflict it may have been possible to believe that the Mexican rulers intended to favor Protestant missionaries at the expense of Catholics. Today it is evident that no form of Christianity can exist unshackled in the land of the Montezumas. The Calles brand of radicalism is, one can say in perfect consciousness of having exaggerated no single epithet, the mentality of scoundrels who enrich themselves on plunder, depend upon a well-paid army for the preservation of their power, and use a certain number of Bolshevistic phrases as a smoke-screen to justify a policy of private and public robbery. The only case anybody can make today for the status quo in Mexico is that it is destroying legal and spiritual institutions. If you believe that even the democratic form of government is autocratic and ought to perish; that the Christian church is a fardle of injurious superstitions that must be got rid of; that industrial organization of every sort is merely evil; that the power of rulers is nothing more than an arbitrary will, which rightly determines its actions by its desires:—then, indeed, you may celebrate the "victories of anarchy" in Mexico with rejoicing and plum-pudding. Not otherwise.

These things are now so well-established that there

is not a single great newspaper office in the United States which does not know them or can entertain the slightest doubt regarding them. I could enumerate two score of trained non-Catholic observers who have been on the scene and can substantiate everything I have said. Why, then, is the press silent? Simply because of its firmly established policy of avoiding religious controversy. And, most unfortunately enough, intense concern with the Mexican situation would precipitate a tremendous controversy. The reasons why this is so are subtle, difficult to state without hurting anyone's feelings, and to some extent intangible. I shall, however, deal with them frankly for the reason that the matter needs clearing up for very grave and, perhaps, even epoch-making reasons.

When President Calles announced his determination to enforce the Constitution of 1917, which had incorporated several strongly anti-Catholic measures, the result was a tremendous wave of indignation among clerics and laymen inside the Church. Many in the United States jumped at the perfectly logical conclusion that since their government had recognized this Constitution, it was to some extent responsible for the outburst of hostility to religion. A convention of the Knights of Columbus was in particular deeply stirred by what had happened; and at the conclusion of several highly emotional sessions, it passed a resolution the only possible interpretation of which was that the State Department had been called

upon to withdraw recognition from Mexico and to lift the embargo on arms. One can readily sympathize with this action on the part of the Knights. A gathering of sincere men had been profoundly moved by news of gross injustice, and wished to do what they could to right wrong. Unfortunately the course they adopted was hopelessly impolitic and quixotic.

They forgot, to begin with, that the American public as a whole knew very little about Mexico excepting that it was a foreign country in which "capitalistic interests" had heavy stakes in oil and other resources. Indeed, these interests were at the time engaged in a controversy with the Calles government regarding certain oil and land laws which threatened the stability of business. Consequently when "liberal" opinion beheld the Knights demanding what was virtually intervention, it simply took it for granted that a new and powerful ally of the "oil magnates" who clamored for intervention had appeared upon the scene. On the other hand, it is highly probable that these "magnates" did not themselves actually desire anything like withdrawal of recognition or lifting of the embargo on arms. These were trump cards which once played would merely mean revolution, but which kept in reserve during a long battle might prove decisive at any of a number of moments.

A still more significant mistake was involved in the course taken by the Knights. While I and almost

everyone else do not believe that Masons in the United States are hostile as a group to Catholics, nevertheless the fact remains that the Knights of Columbus were organized as a substitute for the Masonic Confraternity, membership in which had been forbidden by the Church. And so, when the Knights petitioned the government for action of a definite sort, they necessarily pitted their strength against that of the Masons, who had especial reasons for considering affairs in Mexico from a different point of view. A quotation from an article contributed to *The Masonic Digest* for August, 1927, by Mr. William L. Vail, is in order here. "It is perfectly true," says Mr. Vail, "that Masonry in Mexico, or more strictly speaking, Mexican Masonry, is strongly impregnated with politics and that it is usually militantly fighting the Church—meaning the Roman Catholic Church. So far as I have been able to judge, however, the same condition prevails throughout most all Latin countries and certainly in all Latin-American Republics, for the simple reason that in those countries there has been a constant antagonism between the economic and political elements represented by the Church and those representing the Liberal political parties. The same conditions do not exist in the United States."

There is no reason for inferring from these remarks that Masonry in the United States is championing the Calles government. But *so long as the*

facts were not made absolutely clear, it was only natural that Masons should view the conflict between Church and State in Mexico with a bias; and, indeed, it is remarkable how frequently commentators have resolved the whole struggle into the old liberal-conservative antithesis. Coming as it did suddenly and without careful advance preparation, the Knights of Columbus action therefore directly antagonized the Masonic organization, which as everybody knows is one of the most powerful societies in the republic. Add to this the resentment of that great body of citizens which rightly believes that national action is justified only when the national good is involved, and you have an overwhelming negative to the step proposed by Mr. Flaherty and his aides. It is queer that nobody seems to have thought of the possibility of these things. The whole history shows once more how great is the weakness of that merely numerical strength which is a constant Catholic assumption.

It is, of course, true that steps were immediately taken to rectify the blunder. The Knights themselves repudiated their resolutions and embarked on a vast campaign of publicity regarding Mexican affairs—a campaign which should have preceded, not followed, the step they originally took, provided that was commendable at all. Later on a reasoned consideration of the problem by the American hierarchy resulted in a statement which, while vigorously de-

nouncing the actions of the Mexican authorities, followed the Vatican in declaring that political intervention of any sort was neither valuable nor desirable. The hour was, however, tragically dark. By this time a demand for "hands off Mexico" had become the universal expression of public opinion; and the Calles authorities, sure that no interference would come from the United States, were absolutely free to carry out a program of repression with unparalleled ferocity. Publicly respected spokesmen for the Church had played the trump card—withdrawal of recognition, lifting of the embargo—at the outset of the game. And they had lost. For what heavy and bloody stakes that game was played, God only knows.

Nevertheless—be it said with as much seriousness as words can command—the nature of the Mexican situation is not altered by the attitude of the United States press in regard to it, nor by the pipe-dreams of a misguided public opinion. During 1914, President Wilson inaugurated a system of dealing with Mexico which changed the trend of affairs in that country and so virtually placed a United States endorsement upon the successive stages of an appalling national deterioration. Anti-Catholic agitation is one of these stages. As citizens we may choose to be indifferent to this—to close our eyes and ears to it if necessary. But all the other stages are in progress,

too: the usurpation of all rights vested in the individual Mexican; the disappearance of property as an institution; the cessation of every legitimate business or industrial activity; the passing of public and private safety; the end of education as a process of preparation for the tasks of democratic government; and the utter disregard of the privileges to which foreign citizens are entitled. In the long run we shall find that fourteen years of error have attached to our country a fringe of dangerous and well-nigh irremediable barbarism.

I don't know how the Mexican catastrophe ought to be dealt with. Certain though one is that the existing method is inadequate and even creative of chaos, it is difficult to suggest any program that would repair the damage done. The point to be made here is, after all, a somewhat different one. Mexico has proved how great a gulf can exist between Catholic opinion and general public opinion in the United States. I believe this gulf can be bridged over, must indeed be crossed if injustice is to cease. Undoubtedly, however, there are tremendous obstacles in the way. If it clearly discerns what these are and works out an intelligent method of overcoming them, the Catholic body will have profited by an experience which, harrowingly tragic though it be, is of incalculable value to itself and of great significance to the future well-being and peace of the nation as a whole.

Obviously we who are Catholics cannot depend upon isolation, we cannot retreat from public opinion. There is safety, there is manliness, in only one kind of program. We must attack.

ONE WORD MORE: CONCLUSION

I HAVE never liked Julius Cæsar. From boyhood I retain the impression that a man who pigeon-holed all things so neatly must have been a quite intolerable person, who never realized that when one stands off from them at some distance many details become invisible while others merge into a larger and more important unity. Similarly, it has always been difficult for me to understand how anyone possessing a sense for the final mysteries and realities of human destiny could think of the Christian faith—or more particularly, the Catholic faith —as a series of concrete, detached phenomena or facts. During the course of this book we have, it is true, considered some of these phenomena and facts. The object was to throw light from a very personal but still (it is hoped) not entirely eccentric source upon certain relationships existing between Catholics and their neighbors in the United States. Now it remains to say emphatically that the Church is not these relationships or any others similar to them, but rather a society the primary purposes of which are evident only in the silence of the spirit.

Homage of mine is not likely to be of any great importance. Like millions of other people, I follow

an obscure daily road along which there is work to be done, people to be met, a wage to be earned; and yet (like millions of others again) I am sometimes conscious of doing a strange, yes, even an inexplicable thing. Walking about as a humdrum, frequently abstracted mortal, I know now and then that I am carrying in some inner, secret room resplendent trophies of great triumphs. Many a battle has been fought and won in me—struggles between the base thing human nature probably was before that mysterious morning upon which the breath of the Creator stirred a soul in it,—the thing to which that nature partly reverted after the primal downfall no history or intelligence wholly explains,—and the creature of light and graciousness which all men of good will wish to become. Never once was the outcome automatic. I owned no personal artillery which shattered the enemy upon his approach. Always the decisive factor was the aid which came through a defile the outlines of which I know thoroughly, but through the haze over which my eye has never been able to pierce. Nothing is more real to me in all the world than this accession of strength from Beyond, —an accession which, in my case, has invariably borne a Catholic, even a sacramental, sign.

Those who know this undeniable, salutary reality (and millions do) can never attach primary importance to the political or public manifestations of religion. *Sic transit gloria mundi* will come home to

them every time they behold crimson or purple magnificence. Officials may be, have often been, incompetent or scandalously vicious. Sometimes a troubling stagnation of all the secondary commerce of the soul may seem to indicate that faith is weakening, or is, perhaps, unjustified. It may be impossible temporarily to see with one's reason how this or that doctrine, affirmed by authority as something not to be denied, can really be true. Indeed, no great man living in the shelter of the faith has ever escaped a realization of the myriad difficulties of his position—the ultimate incomprehensibility of the creed to which he professed allegiance, the absence of cogent proofs for the hope upon which he based a staggering dream of the future. Yet though these things are significant and sometimes tragic, none of them is ever equivalent to the abiding central reality —the miracle of advancement, of increasing nobility, which is wrought in the soul through a Strength, a Grace, in which one must believe if one believes at all in anything.

That is why the frigid counsel of Mr. George Santayana to be indifferent to the "indifference of the universe"—though it may well be the essence of a certain lofty philosophical wisdom—is to the conscious Christian nothing short of a prescription for spiritual suicide. For it is the whole essence of a Christian's experience that something greater and better than himself, something remote from the

level upon which human nature in its animalistic character is placed, is *not* indifferent. One grants that it is probably impossible to isolate this essential experience from all others—just as it is highly unlikely that Mr. Santayana's "pure spirit, one truly emancipated and enlightened," could ever dwell in a human body. But there is a great, abiding difference: if our philosopher is right, he *must* achieve the status of "pure spirit"; if the Christian is right, he can joyfully remain a human being, remembering only that the inward star he sees is his proper compass, without which he must revert to the thing he would not be. This Christian reality is not *all* reality, but merely one, clearer, more active, more redemptive than all others. The whole rest of things man can attempt to understand and master: this one he cannot understand, and it must master him.

The Catholic point of view is, therefore, not to be identified with some vague variety of "consolation"—a kind of pulling down the blinds so as not to see the storm. It is basically a heroic manifesto, a decision to follow and to serve, though earth spin "like a fretful midge." I remember that shortly after the Armistice of 1918, a French corporal, returned from captivity, presented himself at the Ministry of War, took a mere shred of a regimental banner from beneath his blouse, saluted, and said, "Sir, I have the honor to return the flag!" He had been one of the garrison of Maubeuge, taken by the

Germans during the course of their initial triumphant advance. The flags had been burned to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy; and this soldier noticed, upon marching out, a fragment that had escaped the flames. He had rescued it, preserved it throughout four years, and then returned it to the nation. Some similar program of rescue seems to be the primal mandate of Christianity. Our banners are not to be kept, stainless and intact, in their cases, but to be carried onward, through conflict and surrender, to the victory. The whole will be in the shred we retain; the rest is to be accounted for by the fighting.

And what is the fighting for? Not to win God, certainly, in whose service we are, but with His help to become triumphant over the rest of reality, to understand it, to subject it to the great plan according to which our bastions are to be builded, in a word to "domesticate" it. The word "home" expresses everything that the Christian mind has conceived of as an ideal for the universe. What else does the far-reaching speculation of Aquinas express? If we could make a chart of all the myriad active principles which create the world, we should have before our eyes the history of a genesis as definitely successive as any family-tree—the long continousness of a propagation which began with the First Father. The firmament and the color on the mountain snow are His seed forever. And so we may know

Him distantly in all things that are provided we see them clearly. There is a giant beacon announcing His presence in the inward light; but there is also a sign of Him in all the radiance flung round this earth, though that is always so infinitely less than man.

We have therefore every reason to cherish the ambition to be free. If someone tells us that we are "tied to the slime from which human ascent has been made," we shall be merry because this someone does not know what "slime" is. This, too, is a stupendous miracle—a darkness suddenly glowing with a glory infinitely removed from impotence. The old Hindu was afraid of "slime," did not understand it and denied its existence, thus taking a great step towards his final denial of God. Mankind has needed six thousand brooding years to attain to its present knowledge of matter, and the mystery is not yet cleared up. Meanwhile Christianity had never denied this or any other reality. Its mission has been to affirm—not God only, but also the numberless works of God. In so far as the sciences, arts and philosophies have been affirmations—in so far, that is, as they have been right—they have not conflicted with Christianity, therefore, but have corroborated its testimony. Every thing that exists, every declaration that is true, every flash of the intelligence that is insight,—all these are part and parcel of the Christian synthesis. The Divine experiment of wedding a soul to an animal, a spirit to a beast, was surely not

undertaken for the sake of making the spirit lonely. There must have been an infinite joyful hope on that creative morning that man would warm his hands at every one of countless earthly fires—that he would feel at "home" in the end.

Yet there is a flaw in our natures—the result of some primal tragic failure through which the spirit grew restive and disconsolate. An immemorial shadow has been flung across the hearth of mankind, a death has occurred which we cannot forget. Nevertheless that death was not given to us unwillingly that we might grieve, but eagerly that we might have more abundant life. It was the ultimate heroic sacrifice—made by One who knew that even its infinite worth would not suffice to give all men joy—to save us from despair. After this, pessimism can only be treason. Only those who do not retreat, who do not admit that the "iron of the universe" is greater than the will of God, can truly be followers of Christ. It is not an easy career, certainly. A wilderness, either of nature or of barbarism, is forever covering up the dim footprints of man. Even so there will always be an army to carry on, until the end. "Come, Holy Spirit" will be an unending and unfailing prayer, on the lips of those who know that no art of living is so satisfying and masculine as theirs. They can well afford to make their own these words of Emerson's: "When you have chosen your part, abide by it, and do not weakly try to reconcile

yourselves with the world. The heroic cannot be the common and the common heroic." Indeed, heroism is the ultimate test of every human enterprise. I have failed in this book if I have not tried to propose it as a test of the excellence—or at least the tolerable virtue—of the Catholic life.

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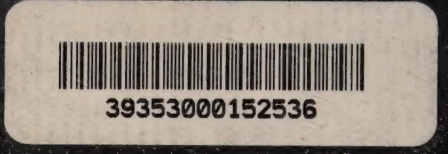
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